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VARIOUS AND IMPORTANT

S U B J E C T S:

PREACHED UPON

SEVERAL OCCASIONS,

I N

CRISPIN-STREET, LONDON.

B Y

J O H N P O T T S, V. D. M.

*But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a Stumbling-block,
and unto the Greeks Foolishness: But unto them which are called,
both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the Power of God, and the Wis-
dom of God. 1 COR. i. 23, 24.*

L O N D O N:

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M DCC LXVI.



T H E
P R E F A C E.

IT is with Admiration I now express my Adoration to that God, who has vouchsafed to own me in these, some of my faint Essays, to serve him, in that tremendous Trust he hath been pleased to commit unto my Charge.

WHEN the subsequent Discourses (some of which) were delivered almost fourteen Years ago, I had not the remotest Thought of ever offering them to the Public; but HE, who, by very mysterious Providences, brings about the most glorious Purposes in his Time, hedged up my Way, so that I could not avoid it, as *Paul* says, for *Necessity*

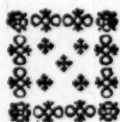
sity was laid upon me. My valetudinary State, together with my constant ministerial Labours that I am called to give Attendance to, as well as other Avocations, has retarded the Publication; which I hope those Gentlemen and Ladies, who have been the Promoters of by their Subscriptions, will pardon. I return them, some of whom have been my Friends and Acquaintance these twenty Years, my most grateful Acknowledgments for this accumulated Proof of the Stability of their Friendship, I am persuaded, not to me alone, but to those invaluable Truths which the following Sermons treat of.

I HAD indeed prepared several other Sermons for the Press, upon *John xvi. 8.* *And when he is come, he will reprove the World of Sin:* But these would not only have swelled the Book to an enormous Bulk, but to an advanced Price. In the mean while, I have published considerably more than what was proposed.

ALL I would now add is, That the promised Spirit, who takes of the Things of Christ, and shews them unto us, may accompany the Perusal of this Piece: Yea, I
pre-

presume, if not under the Power of a Deception, it comes forth into the World, and enters upon its Travels therein, not absolutely naked of the Royal Protection of Heaven, nor destitute of a divine Promise. And I hope, when my Tongue can no more preach the Glories of IMMANUEL from the Pulpit, nor my Pen publish his Praise from the Press, this "shall not die, but live, and declare the Works of the Lord." *Amen.*

Birchin-Lane,
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THE
C O N T E N T S.



SERMON I, II, III.

Gen. xxii. 14. *And Abraham called the Name of the Place Jehovah-jireh, as it is said unto this Day, In the Mount of the Lord it shall be seen.*

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SERMON IV, V, VI, VII, VIII.

Ezek. xvi. 63. *That thou mayest remember and be confounded, and never open thy Mouth any more because of thy Shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God.*

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S E R.

SERMON IX, X, XI, XII, XIII, XIV,
XV, XVI, XVII.

The Marvels of the Month ABIB.

Exod. xii. 2. and Deut. xvi. 1. *This Month shall be unto you the Beginning of Months; it shall be the first Month of the Year to you. Observe the Month of Abib, and keep the Passover unto the Lord thy God; for in the Month of Abib the Lord thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by Night.*

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SERMON XVIII, XIX.

Heaven in Evil.

Amos iii. 6. *Shall there be Evil in a City, and the Lord hath not done it?*

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SERMON XX.

Mal. iii. 11. *And I will rebuke the Devourer for your Sakes, and he shall not destroy the Fruits of your Ground; neither shall your Vine cast her Fruit before the Time in the Field, saith the Lord of Hosts.*

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SERMON

LONDON, Crispin-Street, July 15, 1753.

S E R M O N I.

GENESIS xxii. 14.

*And Abraham called the Name of the Place
Jehovah-jireb; as it is said unto this Day,
In the Mount of the Lord it shall be seen.*

MY Brethren, there is something so moving in this sacred Story, with respect to *Abraham's* going about to sacrifice his only Son *Isaac*, that methinks they must have more than adamantine Hearts that melt not at the Rehearsal of it; especially when it is easy to see, from the Contents of this History, some very strong and striking Circumstances, coinciding with the Manner of the Mediator's delivering you and me from being Burnt-offerings and Sacrifices, to Hands more heavy than *Abraham's*, and a Knife more bloody than that whereby his Son was to have been butchered, namely, the Hand of *Jehovah*, and the Knife of his Justice. How seasonably did he interpose when every Circumstance conspired together for our Death! Hold, hold

B

thy

thy Hand, slay him not — See the Lamb that I have provided — Behold the Ram caught in the Thicket, let it be offered in room of another.

— Should I dwell long upon the preceding Context, it might possibly prevent what I have particularly in my Eye from the Text I have now read. Yet I cannot altogether pretermitt, or pass through this pleasant Part of Scripture, without plucking a Pomegranate or a Fig, and presenting you with a Cluster of Grapes from a Branch of what grows in this *Eshcol's Brook*, as we travel along.

First then it is said, *And it came to pass after these Things, that God did tempt Abraham* — Where observe, that previous Privileges and Tokens of God's Favour, are often followed with future Trials to his Church and Children. See here *Abraham* in the preceding Chapter hath a Son granted him, in a Way of gracious Promise, that was to be an eminent Blessing to him and the Church. See also how he found Favour in a strange Country. — Yet after these Things, it came to pass that God did tempt *Abraham*. — I determine not what is the Nature of every individual Christian's Experience as to this; but certain it is, that the good God, before he hath put his People upon great Trials, hath granted them gracious Proofs of his Pity. Witness the marvelous Manifestations *Moses* had made unto him, while waiting upon the Flock of his Father-in-law *Jethro* upon Mount *Horeb*, there he saw the Bush all in a Blaze, and the Angel of the Lord appeared unto him in the midst of the Bush. There the great I AM manifested

fested himself unto him by that Name, which is his Name for ever, and his Memorial unto all Generations. Well, this was the previous Privilege and Token of God's Favour that was followed with future Trials; for, in virtue of this, he is to go upon a very hazardous Embassy to *Egypt*, and where he is to be threatened by *Pharaoh* for coming to him upon such and such an Account: He is reflected upon by the *Israelites*, his Brethren; he is to see and bear their Manners, so very offensive, for the Space of forty Years. Christ's Way with his Disciples, is also a Proof of this Point, before his Decease: How tenderly does he treat them! That Night in which he was betrayed, as you see in the 16th and 17th Chapters of *John's* Gospel. Like the Father of a Family, he as it were falls upon the Necks of his dear Spouse and Children; he tells them to be of good Cheer, in the World they shall have Tribulation, but in me you shall have Peace.— *My Peace I give unto you, my Peace I leave with you; not as the World leaveth, leave I it unto you.*—I am going to take Possession, would he say, dear Spouse and Children, of the Inheritance in Heaven in your Name.— *In my Father's House are many Mansions; if it was not so, I would have told you, I go, &c.*—I will leave you some Pledges of my Love till I come again, and these shall not be small; I leave you my Spirit to comfort you: *If I go away, I will send the Holy Ghost.*—I will leave you the Symbols of my broken Body and shed Blood; but I myself must go to Heaven to plead for you, and to take Possession thereof.

Well, what was all this a Prefage of? Was it not previous to future Trials? For *it came to pass after these Things, that God did tempt Abraham.*— Was not this just before the Disciples were all scattered abroad, some of them left to deny him, others to desert him? and was it not before they were to suffer so much Persecution for Christ's Sake and the Gospel's, to be hated of all Men, to be made a Spectacle to Angels and to Men, esteemed the Offscouring of all Things? yea, was it not before they were to suffer Death itself?

But not to enlarge further upon this Point, I must put it to the intelligent Christian, whether or not he remembers the Time of God's Love? That after it he met not with some particular Trial, like *Paul*, who, after he was exalted to the third Heaven, had a Messenger of Satan sent to buffet him? You, O Christians, perhaps had Freedom and Enlargements of Soul in Prayer! You had the divine Influences of Heaven, like Dew, distilling down upon you! and upon the Back of this you met with something similar to God's dealing with *Abraham*— *And it came to pass after these Things, that God did tempt Abraham.*

2d OBSERV. That when the Lord tries his People, it is often in a very tender Part; not in a trivial Way, but with a Stroke that wounds the Heart. Hence here see— *Take now thy Son, thine only Son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get to the Land of Moriah, and offer him for a Burnt-offering.* — Every Circumstance here is affecting! The Demand

Demand is high, though the Command is holy: Certainly, the Bowels of a Father were filled with Compassion when this Motion was made to him; the Beauty of a Son, and the Blessings that he promised himself by his Birth, seem all in one Day to be blasted. I know not but *Abraham* had rather that God would have demanded his own Life than that of *Isaac*, inasmuch as he was the Son of the Promise, in whom all the Nations of the Earth were to be blessed: Yea, we doubt not but he would have parted with his worldly All, before he would have inclined to have been the Instrument of the Death of such a promising Child. Well, but as God commands, we must obey. *And take thy Son; not thy Servant; not any of the Sheep of thy Fold, for the Sacrifice; not a Person that thou bearest no Relation to, or some more particular Friend, or the like: Not Thousands of Rams, and ten Thousands of Rivers of Oil, are required here; but verily, the Fruit of the Body, thy Son! thine only Son! Not Ishmael, whom thou hadst by the Egyptian Woman, who is not the Son of the Promise, as Isaac was; but thine only Son, the true legitimate Child, and not the Son of the Concubine; yea, the Son whom thou lovest, who is thy peculiar Favourite, upon whom thy Heart and Eye is fixed; that Child that was like Jacob's Joseph, in respect of all his other Children—And get thee into the Land of Moriah, and offer him there for a Burnt-offering.* — The Manner of sacrificing the Burnt-offering had some Circumstances of Cruelty in it, more than other Sacrifices that were

offered, *Levit. i.* — But still that which was a deeper Aggravation of the Sorrow, was, that *Abraham* himself was to act the Part of the Sacrificer, in slaying and burning his Son, in cutting him into Quarters, and the like. — Thus, my Brethren, when God designs to try his People, you see he doth it in the most tender Part. In this manner also did the Lord deal with *Jacob*, *Job*, and others.

3d OBSERV. That true Grace is of a very yielding and complying Nature unto the Commands of Heaven, and Calls of Providence, as you see in the third Verse. We do not hear one Word of his giving Intelligence to his Wife *Sarah* of what he was about to do, fearing that she might, through her Intreaty or Behaviour, some way frustrate his Intentions; as the Mother of such a Child would soon be moved to such a Degree, when intimated unto her, as that she could not bear it: Therefore in as secret and sure a Way as was possible, he gets off, conquering all Obstacles that seemed to stand in the Way. — When the Believer comes to be convinced, that such a thing is the Command of God, and that he hath a Call thereunto in Providence; if Grace is in Exercise, he will endeavour to obtemperate the divine Order, saying with *Paul* after his Conversion, *Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?* Why, Go preach that Doctrine which thou decriedst; go preach that Christ to be the Saviour of Sinners, whom you persecuted and crucified; go join in Communion with that Church and Society of Men, who formerly

merly thou esteemed Heretics ; and now do thou worship God in that Way, which formerly thou, like the World, called Heresy. Well, all this will I do ; for what Things were Gain unto me, I now account Loss, &c. See the Perfection of Grace in Christ himself ; his human Nature was pain'd how to drink of that Cup which was put into his Hand ; yet when Grace speaks, it says, *Not my Will, but thine be done*. Thus every Christian, as *Abraham* did, obeys the Command of his God, whatever it be. Which leads me to the

4th OBSERV. Though Sin and Nature are very powerful Principles in the Believer, yet Grace and Holiness are more so. The Bands that Nature hath fixed, too often cannot be controuled, by reason, that, alas ! sometimes violates Religion itself : Yet at other times, see when Religion rules, when the Laws of Christ are wrote upon the Heart, and the Love of God constraining the Powers of the Soul ; then there is nothing I know of, that God will command his People, but Grace will influence them to comply with, as it did *Abraham* here to devote his dear Child to Death, and that with his own Hand. And though a Train of very terrible Consequences seemingly would have been the Result of such desperate Cruelty upon *Isaac's* being sacrificed : What would the tender-hearted Mother have said, when she heard that her first and only begotten was killed by the Hand of him that begat him ? How could she again look upon him, whom she formerly called her Lord, without Lamentations ? What domestic Broils must it have

brought into *Abraham's House*? How could she have believed, that verily the Lord bid him be guilty of so inhuman, so barbarous, so unnatural, and so bloody a Scene? But this was not all; What would have been the bad Effects of it upon others, Heathens and the like, who were Enemies to Religion? Thus might they say, Is this the Example of the Man, who was so singular in his religious Pretensions that he will have none but one God,—to murder his own Son? What Mischief would seem to have followed upon such a Scene's being put in Execution?— Well, what of all this, he had received the divine Mandate, and he resolves to obey. He staggered not at the Promise, so the Scripture says of him; so neither did he stand out against the Precept, *Heb. xi. 17.* all the affectionate Reasonings of the Father were swallowed up in the Faith of the Believer. Thus you see also, in the Conclusion of the Chapter, what a powerful Principle Faith is; that these Worthies through Faith subdued Kingdoms, &c. Yea, certain it is, that Grace will conquer every other thing; it will make Man to deny himself, and take up his Cross and follow Christ; foregoing every thing for Christ; Father and Mother, Brother and Sister, and Children, as *Abraham* here did.

5th OBSERV. That though weaker Christians sometimes, like *Isaac*, want Faith to see how God shall provide for his Church and People; yet stronger Christians, like *Abraham*, believe that when he calls them to Duty, he will make Provision for it,

it, and supply all Wants.— *And Abraham took the Wood of the Burnt-offering, and laid it upon Isaac his Son; and he took the Fire in his Hand, and a Knife: And they went both of them together. And Isaac spake unto Abraham his Father, and said, My Father: And he said, Here am I, my Son. And he said, Behold, the Fire and the Wood; but where is the Lamb for a Burnt-offering?—Good Abraham, it would appear, had not informed his Son of his Intentions; and therefore though he believes that his pious Father, from the Circumstances of his carrying the Wood and the Fire, had in View some special Sacrifice, yet he was nonplussed to know whence the Lamb for a Burnt-offering might come from; therefore, says he, *My Father, here is the Wood and the Fire; but where is the Lamb for the Burnt-offering?* — I know not whether these Words that *Isaac* spake, *My Father, my Father*, went not deeper into *Abraham's* Heart, than the sacrificing Knife would have done into *Isaac's*. Howbeit his Father, that was the Father of the Faithful, tells him, that *God would provide the Lamb for a Burnt-offering*. — Thus indeed it is the happy Temper of some Believers to build upon a *Thus saith the Lord*, upon his Word that he causes them to take for the Ground of their sure Hope; while nothing will serve others but Sense; they must see and hear, like *Thomas*, otherwise they will not believe; they must have their Faith fixed at their Fingers Ends, otherwise their Hearts will not believe: But, as the Apostle says in another Case, so also is it true in this, *there is surely a Fault**

Fault among you, that you do so and so ; and as our Lord says, Except ye see Signs and Wonders, ye will not believe : So neither will those weak Believers ; for, like Gideon, they seek a Sign ; one time they must see the Fleece dry, and the Surface of the Earth all around it wet ; at another time the Fleece wet, and the Surface of the Earth all around it dry. Thus Sense says, I believe because I have seen ; whereas Faith says, I believe because God hath spoken.

6th OBSERV. That sometimes it is God's Way to put the Knife of Providence to the Throat of the Son of the Promise, before he appears to prohibit its going any further, as in the Case of *Isaac* ; for *Abram* had lift up his Hand, and was prepared to have put in Execution the next Moment what God had ordered, till he cries, *Abram*, hold thy Hand. *Isaac* by this time no doubt was instructed in his Father's Design, and was become willing to lay down his Life, as the God of *Abram* had commanded it, and as his Father *Abram* was to be the Actor. And methinks I see the different Passions of Fear, of Love, of Obedience, of Faith, Desire, Sorrow, and the like, appearing in his Face, all in Motion : And after *Abram* and his Son heard the Voice, and *Isaac's* Feet and Hands were again unloosed, and he allowed to look about him, what Joy flushed in his Face ! Surely, *Abram* might say, *This is my Son that was dead, and is alive again, was lost and is found.*— Thus see how it is often the Method of God to bring us to the very last Extremity before he gives Deliverance.

Mic.

Mic. iv. 10. Thou shalt go even to Babylon, and there thou shalt be delivered; there the Lord shall redeem thee from the Hand of thine Enemies. —

There is a Crisis, an extreme Point, which the Church and every Christian is often brought into, before their Deliverance comes: and this critical Point is so dark, that it is hard to define, whether or not it shall terminate in Death or Life. *Abraham* knew no other but that he was to be the Death of his Son, in whom the Church had the Promise of Blessing. Every thing appears as if his Funeral Pile was to be erected upon Mount *Moriab*, till God said, Hold, destroy him not, for a Blessing is in him. This also was the Case of the Church and People of God, when they encamped between *Migdol* and the *Red-sea*; when the *Egyptians* were behind them, and the *Red sea* before them, and Mountains on every Hand, *Exod. xiv. 13.* Thus doth God set restraining Bounds to all second Causes, saying, *Hitherto shalt thou come and no further.* Thus in like manner here, when *Abraham* is just about to reach the Blow, behold the Angel of the Lord made him to see a Ram caught in the Thicket, and this he offered instead of his Son. So that this now brings me to what I purpose to dwell upon a little longer.

And Abraham called the Name of that Place Jehovah-jireb; as it is said to this Day, In the Mount of the Lord it shall be seen. These Words are expressive of the gracious Sense that *Abraham* had of God's Grace and Mercy towards him: In which you may observe,

First,

First, The new and august Name that *Abraham* gave to the Place where the Lord appeared unto him, *Jehovah-jireb*. It was among one of the Mountains of *Moriab*. *Jehovah* signifies, in our Language, *the Lord*; *jireb* is taken from a Root that signifies *knowing, providing*.—*Abraham* gave the Name to the Place for this remarkable Reason; because that the Lord did eminently provide, as he told his Son, when he inquired whence the Lamb for a Burnt-offering would come from, that the Lord would *provide himself a Lamb for a Burnt-offering*.

Secondly, Note how the Name hath been perpetuated to succeeding Ages; *as it is said*, or called, *unto this Day*.—*Abraham* inclined to have done a thing clandestinely upon this Mount *Moriab*; but as God had very important Purposes in View thereby, it was to be intirely divulged. Such remarkable Transactions as these, no doubt, were the Subject of much Speculation, not only to the then present Ages, but also to future Generations; therefore *so it is said unto this Day*.

Thirdly, We have the Visibility of this Name; *In the Mount of the Lord it shall be seen*: It is probable that *Abraham*, after so great and gracious a Phenomenon upon this Place, would not depart from it till he had erected some standing Memorial relative to this remarkable Dispensation; wherefore *it is said to this Day, In the Mount of the Lord it shall be seen*.—Did *Jacob*, in his Way to *Paddan-aram*, meet with the God of *Abraham*, in such a manner as made him with holy Amazement to cry

cry out, as in *Gen. xxviii. 16.* *How dreadful is this Place ! this is none other but the House of God, and the Gate of Heaven.* Did he, in Consequence of this, take a Stone that lay under his Head, and pour Oil upon it, vow a Vow, and anoint a Pillar, and hence also changed the Name of the Place from *Luz* to *Bethel* ? Did *Samuel* take a Stone at *Mizpeh*, when the Lord discomfited the *Philistines*, 1 *Sam. vii. 12.* and called the Name of it *Eben-ezer* ? So in like manner *Abraham* had Reason to record the Kindness of the Lord, by calling the Name of this Place *Jehovah-jireb* *.

Now having a little explained these Words, I am next led to deduce some Doctrines from them. Such as

DOCTRINE 1st. As the Manner of God's manifesting himself unto his People, is sometimes very remarkable, so the same merits much of their Regards: *And Abraham called the Name of this Place Jehovah-jireh.*

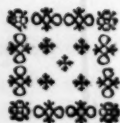
DOCT.

* A late Writer thus expresseth himself upon this Point.—
 “ Beyond all peradventure the Scene where these Things were transacted by *Abraham*, being in the Land of *Moriah*, could not be far distant from the horrid Eminence of *Calvary*, or the lovely Heights of *Zion*. It is a Circumstance by no means unworthy of our careful Attention, that the true Propitiation was offered up nearly in the same Place where the beloved Son of *Abraham* was to expire upon the Altar. Ye Mountains of *Moriah* ! your Name may now be *Jehovah-jireh*, for better Reasons than when the Ram was caught by *Abraham* in the Thicket, which he offered for his *Isaac* ; for God has now provided himself a Lamb ; and in these Mountains the Lord was seen, putting away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself.”

Doct. 2d. That the God of the Faithful is a providing God unto them; or that he, who is *Yehovah*, is also *Yireh*, the Lord the Provider.

Doct. 3d. That the Provision which he hath made for his People is such as, in Process of Time, they shall well perceive, *in the Mount of the Lord it shall be seen.*

I might observe several other Things from this Text; but as these arise naturally from it, without any manifest Violence, I shall stop here, and proceed to the Order and Method wherein we propose to prosecute these Doctrines. Each of these would take me several Days, were I to prosecute all the Purposes that I plainly see in them: But as I have not Time for this Prolixity of Method, I shall therefore at present convert these Doctrinal Heads into so many different Topics of Discourse.



S E R M O N II.

GENESIS xxii. 14.

*And Abraham called the Name of the Place
Jehovah-jireh; as it is said unto this Day,
In the Mount of the Lord it shall be seen.*

DOCT. 1st. **H**ERE we shall observe, that as
the Manner of God's manifesting
himself unto his People is sometimes very remark-
able, so the same merits much of their Regards;
And Abraham called, &c. Now here I must be
permitted to inquire a little,

- I. Into the Nature of the Manifestations of God
to his People, or what it is he manifests to
them.
- II. In what Manner he makes his Manifesta-
tions.
- III. How such Manifestations merit much of
our Regards.

I. Then as to what it is that he manifests to his
People. He manifests the Truth, as it is in Jesus,
unto

unto them. *John vii. 17. If any Man will do his Will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.* The Doctrines of the Gospel he discovers in their genuine Light to them, free from the Sophistry of Satan and sinful Men. Others indeed may have the Letter of the same Truth revealed unto them without; yet the spiritual Meaning is not at all manifested to their Minds. Who were greater Linguists, or more accurate Scholars, than the Doctors under the Law; yet how little did they know of the spiritual and sublime Sense of these Truths which they taught others? And when Christ came and confronted them to their very Faces, though they had been reading the Scriptures all their Life, yet instead of learning therefrom, that he was the very Christ, they so much mistook their Meaning, as to conclude he was not the Messiah, but an Impostor, one who deceived the People: Whereas those that were no such Scholars, when God was pleased to manifest the Truth to them, could tell that he was the Christ, as you see in the Case of *Peter*, when he was asked by our Lord, *Whom do Men say that I am?* some say one thing, and some another: *But whom do ye say that I am? The Christ, the Son of the living God.* What he spoke in Parables to the Public, he explained in private to his Disciples. Hence it is that the Gospel, though objectively revealed, yet is subjectively concealed; *if our Gospel is hid, it is hid to them that are lost, 2 Cor. iv. 3.*

II. He manifests his Secrets unto them. *The Secret of the Lord, says David, is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his Covenant.* There are several grand Secrets which God shews unto his People, such as the World and Strangers intermeddle not with. I shall name a few of them.

First, There is the Secret of the Remission of their Sins, or Absolution from Sin and Wrath.— Thus in *Rev. ii. 17. He that bath an Ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches; To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the bidden Manna, and will give him a white Stone; and in the Stone a new Name written, which no Man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it.*

Secondly, There is the Secret of his Purpose, which he is sometimes pleased to manifest to his People. *Gen. xviii. 17. And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do?* and if you pass on to the 19th Verse, you see the Reason why he thus reveals himself. — Not, my Brethren, that any are allowed to know all the secret Purposes of God: No; these are so impenetrable, that it is God's Prerogative only to know them; but when the Decree brings forth, then we see the Birth, but know little of what is in the Womb of the Decree, till the Vision, which is for an appointed Time, speaks: Yet so it is, that God manifests the Secret of electing Love unto the Soul, in a Way suitable to the divine Oeconomy, *Rom. viii. 28—30.*

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Thirdly,

Thirdly, He manifests his Covenant unto them; he will shew them his Covenant: *Hence, says David on his dying Bed, although my House be not so with God, yet hath he made with me an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all Things and sure.* — The excellent Nature of this Covenant he manifests unto them, such as the Eternity of it, *an everlasting Covenant.* כִּרְתָּ עִוְלָם *diathexu aīwōs*, the Disposition of the Covenant, *ordered in all Things;* the Stability of it, *and sure.* The Maker of this Covenant is manifested, *Psalms lxxxix. 3. I have made a Covenant with my Chosen;* the Mediator, the Messenger, the Testator, the Trustee, Surety, and the like: In short, Christ, as the Covenant, the Sum and Substance of it, the Whole, and the All of it, is manifested. *Psalms xxv. 14. The Secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his Covenant.*

Fourthly, He manifests himself, his glorious Being is seen. This is the first Thing we should always observe; for it is the Foundation of all. *He that comes to God, must believe that he is.* — And this is seen when he comes to his People in their Extremities; his first Discovery of himself is under that glorious Name, which he makes use of, when appearing for the Delivery of *Israel* out of *Egypt*, *I AM*, he bids *Moses* tell them once this, *I AM hath sent me unto you*, *Exod. iii. 14.* All the Fears, Doubts, and Perplexities of the Lord's People, as to the Issue of their Trials, have their Rise in the Power of Unbelief as to this Principle, *I AM* known is the Foundation of all Religion, of
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all Hope, Comfort and Confidence, and the Beginning of all Deliverances. It composes the Soul, quiets all its Risings and Fluctuations, when it knows that I AM is God: When once the Soul is impressed with the Faith of God, it dare look no where else, nor trust to any other thing, nor dare it question Promises, or any thing that God determines in his Word, nor dare it entertain harsh Thoughts of him; and, in fine, it over-awes and influences their Walk into a Suitableness of the Soul's State, as now under the Eye of God, *Heb.* xi. 6. O happy they who have the Faith of this, that God is; but doubly happy they who grow strong in the Faith of it!

Fifthly, The Lord's glorious Properties are seen in his Appearance upon the Mount; his glorious Sovereignty in disposing of us, and our Trials, and all Things that have any Relation to us, according to the Counsel of his own independent Will; his glorious Faithfulness in performing punctually the Promises he has made to his People; he makes himself there known to them, as the Performer of Promises, by his Name *Jehovah*, *Exod.* vi. 3. his deep Wisdom in disposing of Trials and Outgates, suiting all unto the glorious Designs he carries on in the Whole; his Wisdom shines in Suitableness of Means, and Certainty of their Success; and the Depth of it opens in the mysterious, hidden, and secret Management of them; And moreover, his glorious Grace appears in the Relief he gives, the Compassion he shews, notwithstanding the many Faults his People are commonly guilty of; when

they come to Extremities, Grace is seen when Help is given in Need, *Heb. iv. 16.*

Sixthly, The Lord's sweet Relations to his People are discovered in those, his Appearances upon the Mount : Herein they may see the Care and Tenderneſs of a Father, the Watchfulneſs of the Keeper of *Iſrael*, the Power and Conduct of a glorious Protector, with the Wiſdom and Skill of a wiſe Proviſor ; all which, and many other Relations, the Lord ſtands under to his People. *And in the Mount of the Lord* he is ſeen ; acting congruously to them ; a ſweet Encouragement indeed to their Faith, in conſiſting with After-trials.

Seventhly, Herein likewise we have a Discovery of the Lord's Will with reſpect to us, and our Way toward him ; his Conduct plainly ſhews us, that he will have us to live by Faith, leaning firmly upon his Word for all, even when we have not Senſe to be Caution for it ; that he will have us to commit ourſelves and our Ways unto his wiſe and faithful Diſpoſal, following the Lord, going, not knowing where we go ; and that he will have us to wait quietly for the Salvation of our God, hoping always, even unto the End ; and, if he calls us to it, even againſt Hope. Theſe, and ſuch like, are the ſweet Discoveries of the Lord, that are got in his Appearances upon the Mount !

We come now to the *third* Particular under the Firſt General Doctrine ; which was to ſhew, that as the Lord's Manner of manifeſting himſelf unto
his

his People is often very remarkable, so it is that which merits much of our Regards: And we would shew you, from some Considerations, how it merits much of our Regards; or, in other Words, what is the Influence that the Manifestations of God have upon the Minds of his People.

First then it appears, that such Manifestations attract much of their Regards, inasmuch as the Person who manifests himself unto them is God, and their God. God, you know, was wont to speak to the Old-Testament Saints in a Manner very moving, as a Man speaks to his Friend Face to Face, as *Jacob* termed it, *Gen. xxxii. 30. And Jacob called the Name of the Place Peniel; for I have seen God Face to Face, and my Life is preserved.* — But the Sight of God in Majesty, without seeing of him as our God in Mercy, is a terrible Appearance: A Sinner desires not, but dreads such a Sight. Howbeit, when God manifests himself unto his Saints, not merely as God, but as their God, as he did to *Abraham* in our Text, and in other Parts of his Conduct towards him; such Manifestations certainly merit much of their Regards; when he says, *Fear not, Abraham, I am thy Shield and exceeding great Reward.* — How did *Moses*, when God manifested himself unto him by the Name of the Great I AM; and not only by that sovereign Name, but as his God? How did he, I say, remark the Manner and the Matter of such a Manifestation? After he had been upon the Mount with the Lord, and had had so much of his Glory shewn him, that the Children of *Israel* could

not look upon the shining of his Face ; yet *Moses* is so much set upon admiring God, that he cries out, *I beseech thee, shew me thy Glory* : Although but a little before he had seen his Glory.—See also how *Manoah* and his Wife were affected with the Manifestations of God unto them, *Judg. xiii. 22, 23. And Manoah said unto his Wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God. But his Wife said unto him, If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a Burnt-offering, and a Meat-offering at our Hands ; neither would he have shewed us all these Things, nor would, as at this Time, have told us such Things as these.*—Thus you see how the Manifestations of God merit much of his Peoples Regards : And, not to multiply further Instances, it is evident from the Case of *Thomas*, when the Lord manifested himself unto him as his God ; how doth he admire Christ, the Person manifesting, saying, *My Lord, and my God!*—Would it not move-us, and merit much of our Regards, in case we were Prisoners in *Newgate*, and the King himself should come thither, and say, Ah, my poor Subjects ! what is the Matter ? whence came you hither ? and are you thus imprisoned ? It is my Will and Pleasure that you no longer remain here, but enjoy Liberty, Life, and the Tokens of my Love. Was there ever an Instance of this Nature among human Powers ? I remember none. But we may remember an Instance ; yea, many of such a Kind, between the Sovereign God of Heaven and Earth, and his poor imprisoned Subjects here upon Earth : Cannot you recal to Mind the memorable

memorable Day wherein he came to you, while you were in a more dismal Cell than any in *Newgate*, while you were bound with stronger Fetters than any Criminal there? Did the King of Heaven come and say, Ah, poor Prisoners of Hope! I am come to take the Prey from the mighty, and to deliver the lawful Captive: Here is my Pardon, sealed with my Son's Blood; here is my Grace, whereby you shall be brought from this Prison. Will not such Manifestations as these influence your Regards? Were you mourning for the Loss of some favourite Friend, as *Abraham*; had you consigned them over to Death, and you received your Dead again, will not then such a Manifestation as this attract your Attention, and influence you to call the Name of the Place *Jehovah-jireh*? — Could *Mary* and *Martha* forget that Person who recalled their Brother from the Dead? Did he not influence their Regards, when you see that afterwards they made a Supper, and *Lazarus* sat along with him at the Table? *Mary* attended to his heavenly Discourse, and anointed his Feet with a precious Box of Ointment; *Martha* served at Supper. — Sometimes he manifests himself, as delivering from the Strength and Power of some Sin; as he did to *Paul*, when he prayed to the Lord thrice, and he answered him, *My Grace is sufficient for thee*. — Thus see how it is, that as the Manner of God's manifesting of himself unto us is sometimes very remarkable, so it is that which much merits the Regards of his People; inasmuch as the Person who manifests himself un-

to them, is not only God, but their God in Covenant.

Secondly, Another thing that induces them to regard these Manifestations, is drawn from the Consideration, not only of the Person manifesting, but from the Consideration of the Case of the Persons, to whom he manifests himself. Hence you see when God, as in the 18th of *Genesis*, suffered *Abraham* to speak unto him; how humble is he? Verse 27. *And Abraham said, Behold, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but Dust and Ashes!* O! with what deep Humiliation is the Soul filled, when God condescends thus to manifest himself: As *Jacob* also speaks, *I am less than the least of all thy Mercies!* and as *David* declares, *1 Chron. xvii. 16, 17. Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my House, that thou hast brought me hitherto?*—Thus when the Believer considers who he is, what he hath been, and the like, he stands as it were astonished at himself, and says, Wilt thou in very Deed dwell with Man upon Earth? Whence is this to me, that my Lord himself should come to such a sinful Mortal as I am! Sure, this is not the Manner of Men! Yea, how doth such a Manifestation influence the Believer's Regards, when he thinks within himself, Is it this sinful I, to whom God is shewing himself gracious? Is this the *Joseph* whom I sold into *Egypt*? Is this the *Jesus* whom I betrayed, denied, despised, blasphemed, and the like; persecuting him, crying, Away with him, crucify him, crucify him? Was not I the Man, or Woman, a while ago that was a Drunkard,

Drunkard, a Swearer, a Profaner of his Sabbaths, disobedient to Parents, a filthy Wretch? Such were some of you, but ye are now justified, washed, &c. Or, am I not the Man who some Years ago had a shining Character in the Church of Christ, but of late I have backslidden, and turned the Grace of God into Lasciviousness? yet he hath manifested himself anew to such a Wretch as I, saying, *Return, return, O Israel, unto thy God, for thou hast fallen by thine Iniquity I take with you Words, and say, Take away all Iniquity. I will be as the Dew unto Israel:* For as the Dew falls down sovereignly, irresistibly, imperceptibly, so also will he come unto thee; though thou hast spoken and done evil Things as thou couldst, yet wilt thou not from this Time forth call me thy Father, saying, Thou art the Guide of my Youth? *Jer. iii.* Thus, my Brethren, can the Believer help, with *Abraham*, when the Manifestations of God are remarkable, to take special Notice thereof?

Thirdly, God's Manifestations merit the Regard of his Members, in respect of the Place, as well as of the Person manifesting, or the Person manifested unto us. Hence you see that *Abraham* took special Notice of the very Spot of Ground, wherein he met with the Manifestations of God; he calls the Name of the Place *Jehovah-jireb*: *Jacob* calls the Name of the Place where he met with the Lord, *Bethel* and *Peniel*; *Bethel*, the House of God, and *Peniel*, because there he saw God Face to Face. Indeed, my Brethren, there is not much,

much, naturally speaking, in one Place more than another, for it is neither at this Mountain, nor yet at *Samaria*; but, morally speaking, these Places wherein the Lord hath manifested himself unto his People, though it should be under an Hedge, in a Field, a Chamber, a Cottage, yea, or a Prison; With what Pleasure sure do they look upon the very Spot of Ground wherein God met with them! For this Reason it is, that some of God's Saints, when in Prison for the Sake of Christ, instead of calling these Places Prisons, have called them Palaces. I knew a Man could never pass by the Place, where the Lord was pleased to come and manifest himself unto him; but, as *Peter* did in another Case, he fell a weeping, and dropped a Tear at the Remembrance of the Manifestation, saying within his Soul, If all the Gold of *Ophir* were mine, if all the Glory of this World was mine, I would willingly part with it all, to have but a few Moments of such a Manifestation as I met with in this Place. God saw me under the Tree, as he did *Nathaniel*, when I poured out my Heart, and communicated my Case to him, he came and fell upon my Neck, and said, *Fear not, I will be with thee, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.* — Thus these *Bethels*, these *Peniels*, these *Horeb Hills*, and *Pisgab's Heights*, with *Tabor Mounts*, whereupon the Lord manifests himself unto his People; how did they fix and imprint in their Minds the Remembrance of God's manifesting himself unto them!

Fourthly,

Fourthly, The Time wherein God manifests himself unto Men, is that which hath much Influence upon their Minds, as you see exemplified in *Abraham's* Case, recorded in the Text. It was at such a Crisis, such an Hour, as seemed to threaten Ruin, *Ezek. xvi. 6, 8.* It was a Time of Extremity, and it was a Time of Love, when he spread his Skirt over *Jerusalem*, to cover her Nakedness, and said unto her, Live. How moving is the Narration that God made, on a Time when *Israel* went after him in the Wilderness, in a Land uninhabited! *Jer. ii. 2.* The Spirit of God is very particular in remarking the Season wherein Manifestations were made unto the Saints: Hence the Morning of our Lord's Resurrection is particularly remarked; as the Season and Time when he manifested himself to the Women that went to the Sepulchre the first Day of the Week. It is, so to speak, the Christian's Memorandum-day, the memorable Day never to be forgotten. *John* the Divine makes particular Mention of the mysterious Manifestations which were vouchsafed him, while he was in the Island called *Palmos*; and observes, that he was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day. — Thus, my Friends, do *Israel* remember the Month *Abib*; was it as the Beginning of Months unto them? for in the Month *Abib* they came up out of the Land of *Egypt*. Sure am I also, Christians, if you call to Mind the Hour, the Day, the Year, wherein you came up out of the Land of spiritual *Egypt*, the House of Bondage, it was as the Beginning of Months and Years to you. The
 Lord's

Lord's Day will be very dear to you, the Time surely hath been, when your Sabbaths were sweet; and the Day of Christ's Resurrection is yet dear to you, inasmuch as the Lord hath manifested himself to you on his own Day. Thus you see the Time and Season wherein the Lord manifests himself to his People, is that which influences them to regard the Manifestation.

Fifthly, Another Thing that merits the Regards of the Lord's People, is the Manner of his manifesting himself to them. This the Spouse takes Notice of, *Cant. v. 4. My Beloved put in his Hand by the Hole of the Door, and my Bowels were moved for him.* — Here the Manner of Christ's manifesting himself is remembered, *by the Hole of the Door*; the Door in Scripture is taken for the Heart, and the Faculties of the Soul: Behold, I stand at the Door, and knock; ye Gates, lift up your Heads, ye Gates that last for ever, &c. *And my Bowels were moved* within me; all my Affections were raised, I was all in Raptures with my Beloved. — Thus, my Friends, the Manner of God's manifesting himself deserves your Regards. If it was by such and such a Word darted into your Souls, as a Ray of Light, of Life, of Love, of Consolation, and the like, that particular Word of Scripture will be dear to you; though the whole Book of God is your Delight; yet this, and that, and the other Promise, and the other Part thereof, you may call your own, in a more remarkable Manner than another. *This Word of thine*, says the Psalmist, *is my Comfort in the House of my Affliction, even that*
which

which thou causedst me to take for the Ground of sure Hope. — If it was by such and such an Instrument, such and such a Christian, such a sent Servant of God, such an Angel of the Lord, that came with the Message from Heaven to you; or if it was by such and such a Providence that the Lord manifested himself to you, that you saw his Finger fully therein: Though Men were employed in such a Providence, yet you, with *Joseph*, saw that it was not your Brethren that sent it you, but God.

Sixthly, and lastly upon this Head; The Matter of these Manifestations is such as moves the People of God to regard them. Why, what is the Matter of such Manifestations? First, the Trinity, Father, Son, and Spirit; the Father manifests the Son to the World, the Son manifests the Father: *I have manifested thy Name to them which thou gavest me out of the World; thine they were, and thou gavest them me.* The Holy Ghost manifests both; for he shall take of the Things of God, and shew them unto us. — The Mind of God, as well as God himself, is the Matter of such Manifestations. We Christians have much of his Mind, above what the Heathen World have; they have no more than Nature's Light, we have the eternal Purpose and Counsel of Heaven revealed to us. God hath told us the Thoughts and Secrets of his Heart: *The Things that were hid for Ages past hath in these latter Days been made manifest to us by his Son Jesus Christ.* — What is it that is profitable to know which God hath not informed his
People

People of? — Would you know what you are by Nature? then read the second Chapter of the Epistle to the *Epheſians*. The poor Heathens feel ſome Diſorder about them, but they cannot define from whence it came: You are taught, that, as by Man came Sin, ſo by Man came Death, the Wages of Sin. Would you know what State all Mankind by Nature are in? then God tells you this, that the World lieth in Wickedneſs; that every Imagination of Man's Heart is evil, and that continually. Would you know what is your own particular State; whether or not you are yet in the Gall of Bitterneſs, and Bands of Iniquity; or, if you are paſſed from Death to Life? then you may read the Mind of God upon this Point in various Paſſages. Would you know how you paſs from Death to Life? why God hath alſo told you his Mind upon this, that it is by the Spirit of Regeneration, *John iii.* Would you know how this Spirit operates, in order to the Production of Life in the dead Soul? you have the Mind of God upon it, *the Wind bloweth where it liſteth; thou heareſt the Sound thereof, but canſt not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth.* Would you know the Ground of your Acceptance with God? then the Spirit of God tells you his Mind clearly, that it is not by Works of Righteouſneſs which you have done, but by the Blood of Jeſus. I muſt not enlarge.

S E R M O N III.

GENESIS xxii. 14.

*And Abraham called the Name of the Place
Jehovah-jireb; as it is said unto this Day,
In the Mount of the Lord it shall be seen.*

THIS leads me to the Consideration of the

2d DOCTRINE. That *Abraham's* God is a providing God to his People; or that he who is *Jehovah*, is also *Jireb*: And here it will be proper,

- I. To shew what he hath provided for his People.
- II. How he hath provided. And,
- III. Why he hath done it.

As to the *first*, he hath provided a Lamb for a Burnt-offering: The Lord *will provide himself a Lamb for a Burnt-offering*; namely, his own Son, who was the Lamb slain before the Foundation of the World decretively. Without such a Burnt-offering,

offering, his People themselves must have been continual Burnt-sacrifices to incensed Justice. What would have been the Fate of *Isaac*, if God had not provided a Lamb? Death, in all Probability. Such also would have been the tragical End of all Men, had not the Lamb of God, that taketh away the Sins of the World, interposed and said, *Lo! I come, &c.*

Secondly, As he hath provided something for a Sacrifice, so also hath he provided something to satiate our Souls: He replenishes the weary, and satiates every longing Soul. — *Israel*, when in the Wilderness, made much ado about their being provided with Bread and Water; God provided both for them, and that in a very miraculous Manner too: Their Bread, you see, came directly down from Heaven; the Manna that was rained down about their Tent-doors, from Day to Day, was all of God's providing: And as for their Water, you know the Rock at *Rephidam* profusely poured out Water to them, and they all drank of it; and that Rock was Christ. Thus doth God provide for his People. Sometimes they see not whence even their little Bit of Bread shall be brought from; but God makes them to see that upon the Mount of the Lord he will provide; and that their Bread shall be given them, and their Water shall be sure. Thus God provides not only temporal Provisions, but spiritual: For, as the Lamb that he hath provided is a Subject meet for Sacrifice, so also is it fit for Food; hence is it said, *My Flesh is Meat indeed, and my Blood is Drink indeed.*

Thirdly,

Thirdly, As God has provided a Lamb for a Sacrifice, and something to satiate the Soul; so also doth this Lamb that he hath provided afford Raiment. It is a Creature, you know, that was used as a Sacrifice for Sin, and also to satiate Hunger: In like manner, this Lamb that God hath provided, hath a Fleece fit for Raiment; it is not only profitable while living, but useful when dead. Often do we read of the Clothing of the Saints: Perhaps they have not *Dives'* Dresses here, their Attire may be poor and plain; but the Raiment that the Lamb of God hath provided, and put upon them, is more pure than they have who are in King's Palaces. *Psalms xlv. 13, 14. The King's Daughter is all-glorious within; her Clothing is of wrought Gold. She shall be brought unto the King in Raiment of Needle-work; the Virgins her Companions that follow her, shall be brought unto her.* — The twenty four Elders about the Throne are said to be clothed with white Raiment, pure white, which is called the Righteousness of the Saints. Thus he provides Raiment for his People: And you see he recommended to the poor, lukewarm *Laodicean Church, Gold and white Raiment, that the Shame of thy Nakedness may not appear, Rev. iii. 18.*

Fourthly, There are Riches provided in Consequence of this Lamb's being provided, durable Riches, and Righteousness; the unfearchable Riches, and Wisdom of God, are lodged in this Lamb of his providing. If this Lamb is our *Fireb*, it is impossible that we can be poor; although we may

not have such a Weight of the yellow Clay, that this Earth produces, as many have; yet we may be rich, more so by far than those who have more of it than they can well tell what to do with. — If we are among those infatuated Fools, those poor Worm-worldlings, that think there are no Riches like a little Shew of this World and Things therein, we must be Strangers to the Riches that the Lamb of God hath treasured up in him. — Can Earth's Riches ransom you from Death? no; if so the Poor only would die. Can they redeem the Soul from Sin and Wrath? no; the Redemption thereof is precious, and ceaseth for ever. Can they give Quiet to the Conscience? no; they often rather increase the Storm and Tempest therein. Can they make the Pains of Hell pleasant? no; they increase the Torment thereof, as you see in *Luke xvi.* But the Riches that we now speak of can ransom the Soul from Death, so that Believers can say, *Where is thy Sting?* They can redeem from Sin and Wrath; they can ease the troubled Conscience; they can make the Soul to sing, even in Poverty; they can carry off all Apprehensions of being hurt by the Fire of Hell; they tend to quench the Burnings thereof; whereas worldly Riches render the Flame more furious.

Fifthly, He hath provided an Habitation for them: Thus it is said, *that he hath made of one Blood all the Nations of the Earth, and hath determined the Time before appointed, and the Bounds of their Habitation.* And you know what this Lamb
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of God said to his Disciples, when he was about to depart from them, *In my Father's House are many Mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you, I go to prepare a Place for you.* Yea, says the Apostle, *if this earthly House were dissolved, we have an House, an Habitation eternal in the Heavens. In this we groan, being burdened.* — My Brethren, there is a two-fold Habitation that God hath provided for his People; one of which is here in this World, and the other in that which is to come. The Church of God is termed, according to Scripture-Language, the House of God; the Pillar and Ground of Truth, the House of the living God; God dwells with them here in this House; for he delights in the Gates of *Zion*, more than in all the Dwellings of *Jacob*. In all Places of the Earth, wherever his Name is recorded, there will he come unto them, and there will he bless them. All his Children are brought into this House, the Church militant; if any are not brought into it, God deals with them as Strangers and Foreigners, and not as Fellow-Citizens: But their Continuance in this House is sometimes very short, like a Man upon a Journey; he puts up at an Inn for a Night, and moves in the Morning. — But then there is an House, which is eternal, in the Heavens; once there, never, never more shall they remove, for they shall be ever with the Lord: When they are brought into the Palace of the King, there they shall remain and abide for ever, with that general Assembly and Church of the First-born, whose Names are written in Heaven;

with God, the Judge of all, and Jesus, the Mediator of the new Covenant. — Then, when the Soul comes to that blessed Society, it is ready upon its first Arrival to say, Is this the Heaven I so often heard spoke of, when in the House of God below? Is this the Lamb that sits in the midst of the Throne, that I have believed in, that was slain and sacrificed for me? Is this my God, who hath taken on him my Nature? Do I now see him here in his Glory as God, and yet know that he is Man? But what more, still says the Soul, is this wretched I, that am now come hither, all renewed, more pure and perfect than *Adam* in Innocency? Am I here no more to be annoyed with my Adversaries, no more to feel the Motions of Sin in my Members? Add to all this; is this the Place, the House and Habitation, wherein I am to stay to Eternity? Was I indeed to remove from hence, my Heaven would be Hell: But ever, ever with the Lord, I will here join the Assembly of the Harpers in the Song of *Moses* and the Lamb, with the common Chorus, *Amen, Hallelujah*. As *Abraham* called the Mount *Moriab*, so may I this Place *Jehovah-jireh*; *In the Mount of the Lord it shall be seen*.

Sixthly, He hath provided for their Education: Hence it is said, that *all Zion's Children shall be taught of God, and great shall be the Peace of her Children*. Indeed they are not all instructed in the liberal Arts and Sciences; but they are all instructed in that useful Knowledge of Christ, and him crucified; and as the Apostle did, so do they,
esteem

esteem every thing but as Loss and Dung, for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ, and him crucified. And in order that they may grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, God hath provided Ministers to teach them, according to his Promise, *I will give them Pastors according to my own Heart, who shall feed them with Knowledge, and with Understanding.* — The Spirit of God indeed is the great Teacher, come from God to teach them all Knowledge, and to bring all Things to their Remembrance: But then, subordinate to this Spirit, God hath ministering Servants; as, under the Law, it was the Priest's Lips that should keep Knowledge, and the People were to seek the Law at his Mouth; so under the Gospel, God hath given, as you see; *Eph. iv. 11, 12, 13. some, Apostles; and some, Prophets; and some, Evangelists; and some, Pastors and Teachers: For the perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ: Till we all come in the Unity of the Faith, and of the Knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man, unto the Measure of the Stature of the Fulness of Christ.* — I might mention a few Lessons that the Lord's Children learn; such as, first, that they are utterly lost that their Parents played the Prodigal, and spent all the Estate they had given them; and not only so, but in like manner, through their Prodigality contracted such a Disease, as hath become hereditary to them, so that they have all been Lepers, as they came from the Loins of their Father: This is the Lesson that

they learn with Tears of deep Regret and Lamentation. In like Language with the Church, the Crown is fallen from our Head, Wo unto us that we have sinned. But then *Jehovah-jireh* doth not leave them here, and bring them no further: No; after he hath taught them the A, B, C, the Alphabet and Beginning of Religion, he proceeds to instruct them, as he did *Nicodemus*, concerning the Nature and Necessity of Regeneration, together with the Nature of Justification and Sanctification. Hence every one that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh unto God; by Hearing and Learning, they are brought unto God.

Seventhly, He hath provided a Rod for correcting them. This may seem to Sense unsuitable Provision; but it is very necessary, and what Christ hath left as a Legacy to his Church and Children: *In the World ye shall have Tribulation; but be of good Cheer, I have overcome the World. But if his Children forsake my Law, then will I visit their Sins with a Rod, and their Faults with Chastisements; nevertheless, my Loving-kindness will I not take from them.* — Solomon says, *He that spares the Rod, hates the Child.* — Then is it not from an over-indulgent Disposition, and too much Love, that Parents spare the Rod? How then, do they hate the Child? Why, in the Event, it is equally as hurtful to the Child, as if they did really hate it, as manifold Instances confirm. So God will not be without the Rod; he hath provided this for his Children; there is a *Need be*, as the
Apostle

Apostle speaks for it; *If need be you are in Heaviness through manifold Temptations.* What else is the Meaning of our being born unto Trouble? And you frequently find that God's dearest Children, those that have been most useful in the Church, have been the Persons who have met with most Rubs and Rods in the World, as you see in *Heb. xi.* What was the Way whereby the poor prodigal Son returned unto his Father's House? Was it not by Means of his being reduced to a starving Condition? And the Prophet *Hosea* speaks, *I will bedge up thy Way with Thorns, that thou shalt not find thy Lovers.* — O! many, many of the Lord's *Israel* have been made to bless him, that he brought them through Fire and Water to a wealthy Place. *It was good for me,* says the Royal Psalmist, *that I was afflicted; before I was, I went astray.* O! says one, methinks I should not have known I had verily lost my Soul, if the Lord had not left me to lose my Estate. O! says another, this I know, if the Lord had not taken me the Sea-way to Heaven, I fear it would have been worse with me. — Hence sometimes he sends Sickness and Disease upon the Body, at another Time Sorrow upon the Soul; sometimes he takes from me the Desire of mine Eyes, a Father, a Mother, a Husband, a Wife, or dear Child; and thus hath he brought me to see, with *Solomon*, that all here is *Vanity and Vexation of Spirit.* — Thus, Christians, believe there is a Rod provided for you, if you belong unto the Family of Heaven; for if you are without Chastisement, you are Bastards,

and not Sons, for what Son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? It may be, that sometimes the People of God fall into what our Lord forewarns his Followers of, *Take heed, lest any Man be overcharged with Surfeiting and Drunkenness, and the Cares of this World, and that Day come upon you unawares.* — Well, if this fall to be their Case and Disorder, then they must have Physic, a proper Regimen must be followed; then the Physician of Value must exercise his Skill, in order to perform the Cure: Physic, as well as Food, they must have at Times, otherwise dangerous Disorders will follow.

Eighthly, He provides Armour for them, as you see in *Eph. vi. 11. Put on the whole Armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the Wiles of the Devil.* — They have the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. The Christian Life is not only a wayfaring; but a warfaring Life, from the Day of their Entrance as Volunteers into Christ's Service; they draw the Sword, and have not a Minute's Time to put it up into its Sheath again, till they are arrived within the strong Fortifications of *Zion* above. Ah! did we but see the daily Dangers we are in, that there are Enemies on all Hands, within us, without us. Did we believe what Legions of Devils are associated against us, as the poor Man speaks, coming out of the Tombs, *My Name is Legion, for we are many*; sure we should see more of the Necessity of the Practice of that Rule, *Watch and pray, lest ye enter into Temptation.* But when we are enabled to exercise
this

this Armour, how does Satan fall like Lightning before us, especially when we are taught how to handle the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God! You see what a Conflict the Captain of our Salvation had with the Devil in the Desert, and by what Weapon he conquered him: Why, I think it is worthy of your Notice. *Matt. iv. 3—5.* First the Devil bade him, *command that these Stones should be made Bread.* What Weapon doth Christ repulse him with here? *It is written,* says he, *that Man shall not live by Bread alone, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the Mouth of the Lord.* Here the Word of God is the Weapon.—He attacks him a second Time, and takes him up unto a Pinnacle of the Temple, saying, *If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down; for it is written, He shall give his Angels Charge concerning thee, and in their Hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any Time thou dash thy Foot against a Stone.* Well, how, with what Answer does our blessed Lord again repel him with the Word of God? *It is written,* says he, *Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*—Again he taketh him up into an exceeding high Mountain, and sheweth him all the Kingdoms of the World, and the Glory of them; saying, *All these Things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.* Well, with what Weapon doth he finally frustrate him? with the Word of God; *it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* Thus he hath hereby taught us with what Weapon we may expect to succeed in our Expectations against the Adversaries of our Souls.—Are we
tempted

tempted to such and such a Sin? why then hear what the Word of God says concerning it; *Though Hand join in Hand, yet will he not suffer the Workers of Iniquity to go unpunished: The Soul that sinneth shall die. Shall I do this Iniquity, and sin against God? surely not.* — Are we tempted to Error? why then let us have Recourse to the Armour that *Jehovah-jireh* hath provided. — Do we fear Danger? then let us have Recourse to the same Word, *Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, I am thy God.* Psal. xci. 1. *He that dwelleth in the secret Place of the most High, shall abide under the Shadow of the Almighty.* — What is the Reason that so many make Shipwreck of Faith and a good Conscience in our Day, and that it is with Difficulty Men are kept from becoming Apostates? It is surely because they have not received the Truth in the Love of it; because they cleave not to the Law and to the Testimony, but listen to many jarring Sounds, that, instead of settling and composing them, tend to Confusion: Therefore, Christians, it is well that God hath provided Armour of Proof against all these Things. O! my Brethren, hence let us learn to love our Bibles, and read them, more than the loose, luxuriant Productions, that the Press brings to Light in this distracted Day.

Lastly, God hath provided a Throne and a Kingdom for his People: Hence the Scripture speaks of them as sitting upon Thrones, and having a Kingdom; *as my Father*, says our Lord, *both given to me a Kingdom, &c.* Yea, they are spoken

spoken of as being Kings and Priests; *He hath made us Kings and Priests.* All the Children of God are Heirs of a Kingdom; though naturally Heirs of Hell, yet spiritually made Heirs of Heaven. — If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him, as the Apostle speaks, *Rom. viii. 17. If Children, then Heirs; Heirs of God, and Joint-heirs with Christ.* — But what shall I say? *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it entered into the Heart to conceive, what God hath prepared for them that love him.* We may have some small Apprehension about it, and speak of it as Children; but the full Comprehension thereof we know not.

We now pass on to the *second* Thing proposed; which was to inquire a little how these Things were prepared. And,

First, They were prepared before Time, from all Eternity: Hence it is said, *Titus i. 2. In Hope of eternal Life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the World began.* To whom was this eternal Life promised before the World began? The Church of God had not as yet started up out of the Womb of Time; and though it was promised, and promised indeed to them from Eternity, yet it was to them as in Christ, their Head, who is the prime Heir of all the Promises of God, in whom they are all Yea and Amen, to the Glory of God. — The Provision then which *Jehovah* has made for his chosen is very ancient; if we admire any thing, as some do, for Antiquity's sake, surely there

there is nothing that can more demand our Admiration than that which was done before the World was. We are taught a little of what the most High was employed in before the Beginning of Time; and it was to provide a Lamb indeed for a Burnt-offering, when none were Witnesses to the secret Transactions of his Counsel, but the Trinity: Then what he projected in his eternal Mind, made Way for the Manifestation of the Mystery of our Redemption. We read that, at the Beginning of Time, there was a kind of a Council called about the Creation of Man, come, *let us make Man*: So certainly when this Provision, so ancient, was prepared, the Counsel of Peace was about Man.

Secondly, God hath provided wisely for his People; infinite Wisdom is manifest through the whole of the divine Contrivance: It appears in the very Choice of the Creature that he purposed to provide for. The Angels that fell had no Share in this Provision; no Lamb is provided for a Burnt-offering for them: No; they all are of the Mankind Race that were the Objects of the Choice; those that are elected according to the Foreknowledge of God. If all had been chosen, it could not, in Propriety of Speech or Sense, be said that they are elected; for the very Term imports a segregating, or picking out some from a Number. — Again it also appears, inasmuch as he seems not at all to have been moved or determined in the Choice, from any Consideration of the Good or Evil that was about the Creature; for before the Children had

had either done Good or Evil, it is said; *Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated.* — But further, Wisdom is evident in the Distribution of this Provision, as to the Time, the Manner, the Matter of it, and the like. As to the Time, it is an acceptable Time; *in an acceptable Time have I heard thee*: It is seasonably given out, as you see in the Case of *Abraham*. — As to the Manner, it is without Money and without Price. *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the Waters; and he that hath no Money, come buy Wine and Milk without Money and without Price.* — If a Man gives any thing in order to purchase this Provision, he should have something to glory in, as the Scripture speaks, before God: But it is all of Grace; the Treasure is in earthly Vessels, that the Excellency of the Power might be of God. If we think to purchase it by any Performance of ours, we are in as dangerous a State as *Simon Magus* was in, when he thought to purchase the Holy Ghost with Money: *Thy Money perish with thee; thou hast no Part or Lot in this Matter.*

Thirdly, It is sovereignly provided: Hence, says our Lord, *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, because thou hast hid these Things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto Babes; even so it seemed good in thy Sight.* — It was his Will and his Wisdom's Pleasure, and what further Reason can we render why this Provision was made for us: He was Sovereign in the Communication of all this Grace, he might or he might not. But then it is such absolute Sovereignty,

as is attended with supreme Wisdom. Few of the absolute Potentates and Monarchs of this World, but discover a World of Weakness and Wickedness while they reign arbitrary : But *Jebovah-jireh*, though he is Sovereign in the Administration of his Provision, yet the highest Godlike Wisdom is clearly displayed upon the Whole. *O the Depth of the Riches and Wisdom of God ! How unsearchable are his Ways, and his Judgments past finding out !*

Fourthly, This Provision is wonderfully prepared, in regard it is of a durable Nature, and very permanent. I remember that the Manna putrified, when it was kept too long ; but this Provision, this heavenly Manna, never putrifies. Yea, what is still more strange, it is never diminished ; by its being given out to the Saints, there is enough and to spare ; yet there is Room : The Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes points forth the Nature of this Provision ; it, so to speak, magnifies the more it is made use of ; it is like the Widow's Oil : All that ever knew what it was to taste of this Provision, have proved the Truth of this ; the Fathers before the Flood shared of it ; the Patriarchs, the Primitive Christians, and we in the Gospel-Church, and those that follow us : Yet still it is the same for Quantity and Quality, *Jesus Christ, the same Yesterday, To-day, and for ever.*

Fifthly, This is nonsuch Provision : What our Lord says with respect to it, as in the Case of the Woman of Samaria, is certainly true, *Whosoever shall*

shall drink of the Water that I shall give him, shall never thirst. — Strange! Is there any Water that has this physical Quality, that he who drinks once thereof shall never thirst again? Is there any Meat that has this plenary Quality, that he who eats thereof shall never hunger again? No; I know of none, but that Bread which cometh down from above, and that Water of Life which Christ himself provides. Men may be surfeited with the nicest Productions and Preparations of Nature, but we cannot be so as to the other; for the more we enjoy thereof, the more we desire to enjoy: For the Provision itself is of an appetizing Nature; hence, say they, who shared of it in the Days of Christ's Flesh, *Lord, evermore give us of this Bread. Eat, O Friends, drink ye, drink ye abundantly, O beloved.* — But not to insist, we shall now proceed to make some Improvement of what has been said.

USE I. Hence if this Doctrine be true that we have been hearing, we may learn what mad Men they are, who imagine Religion to be a low-lived Thing, unprofitable Service, and the like, not worth the Pursuit of gay and great Men, &c. — O! but know that such are very much mistaken. What is it that some Men value themselves upon? Is it because they are opulent, wealthy, and the like? Well; though they were as rich as ever *Cæsus* was, the Christian may compete with them; for he hath durable Riches and Righteousness provided for him: The poor Worldling may be deprived of all his Wealth in a Night. Can he, or
any

any one insure it? No; both the Insurer and the Insured may share of the same Fate. Who knows not how many invisible Enemies are *incog.* about his House? How soon may his Fabric be sunk or consumed by some sudden Accident? How soon may some designing Thief rob him of his Riches; or some foreign Enemy invade the Land, and deprive him of his Estate? What Certainty is there then here, though he should say, Come, I will enlarge my Barns and Magazines; while, this Night it may be, his Soul is required at his Hands? But know, O Christians, for your Comfort, that your Treasure is better secured; it is laid *up where Moth and Rust do not corrupt, neither where Thieves do break through or steal.* No Plot of Men or Devils can defraud you of it; it is secured with the Munition of Rocks, all the Promises and Perfections of God. O! then see how far a Christian hath the Advantage of a rich *Craesus*, who values himself upon his Wealth and Opulence. Some value themselves for their fine Clothing, their gay and splendid Dress, their Eyes are dazzled therewith; but pray what is there attractive here? there is more Splendor and natural Beauty in the Wings of a Butterfly, than in all this; for, as our Lord said, when he looked upon a Lily, *Solomon in all his Glory was not arrayed like one of these.* — O! why then should any admire themselves for this foolish Finery! Is not the Robe that Christ's Spouse is adorned with, of a more noble and beautiful Nature than any thing this vain World can boast of? Is not the Wedding-Garment, that all
the

the Friends of the Bridegroom must wear and have on, of a more peculiar Nature than any thing that the Dexterity of Man can manufacture? — Some set much Store by the Clothes they were married in, and will only wear them at certain Seasons; but the Garments wherein Christ's Bride was betrothed, and brought to him in, she wears every Day; that is, his Righteousness: This is the Wedding-Garment, which if we have not on, though we had the Clothing of a King or Queen, Christ will say to us, *How camest thou in hither, not having on the Wedding-Garment?* — But do any value themselves because of their fine Houses, and think little of the Place where the Lord's People dwell? So the Daughter of Zion is represented as a *besieged City*, Isa. i. 8. as a *Cottage in a Vineyard*, as a *Lodge in a Garden of Cucumbers*. But know that God dwells with them, in Dwellings of the Righteous; where the gracious Melody of Prayer, of Praise, and the like, is heard, there is the Lord's Right-hand. — Do others value themselves for their Education; because they are Men of Literature, fine Linguists, Philosophers, and the like; because they know all the Sciences? Well, surely, the People of God may compet with them in this, for they know something that others know not, though their Learning may not be as extensive as *Aristotle's*, or some of the ancient Sages: They know Christ, and the Power of his Resurrection, and the Fellowship of his Sufferings: They know what it is to be denied to every thing here; to their own Lives; to their own Learning; to their

own Riches, Honours, and the like; to their Friends, Father, Mother, Brothers, Sisters, Wife, Children, and the like. But can an un sanctified Heart say thus much? these Delights are his All; if you take away these from him, he will be ready to say, you have taken away my Gods, and what have I more? for indeed he makes Gods of them; inasmuch as he thinks more upon them than he does upon God, and they have more of his Heart. — Possibly you have Success in the World, or otherwise, you have not that Rod of Adversity laid upon you, that many of the poor People of God have, hence you prefer yourselves to them. O! is it thus with any? why then, know that you have one of the black Marks of Bastards. I remember it is said of *Abraham*, that he gave *Ismael* his Portion, and sent him away: *Ismael* was the Child of the *Egyptian* Bondwoman, illegitimate, base born; but he reserved the Inheritance for *Isaac*, the Son of the Promise. So does God deal with many of the poor Worm-worldlings here; he gives them their Portion, as *Abraham* did *Ismael*, and they are sent away with it; it is all the Heaven they are to have: And indeed, as Christ said unto the Pharisees, fond of the Praise of Men, *Verily, you have your Reward: And so have they.* But, O! O! a poor Reward: *For what will it profit a Man, if he should gain the whole World, and lose his Soul; or what shall a Man give in Exchange for his Soul?*

of good will: you or think to be a good man. Doct.

Doctr. III. The *third* and *last* Doctrine deduced from the Text was this, viz. *That the Provision which God hath made for his People is such, as in Process of Time they shall well perceive; In the Mount of the Lord it shall be seen.*

We shall now conclude the Whole upon this Subject, with a few Strictures from this Doctrine. And,

First, It is no inconsiderable Circumstance elucidating this Doctrine, that the Provision which God hath made for his People, in Process of Time they shall well perceive; inasmuch as what was transacted by *Abraham* in *Moriab*, upon one of the Mountains that God shewed him there, was just adjacent unto Mount *Calvary*, where the expiatory Victim was offered up for our Salvation. O ye Mountains of *Moriab*! the Name you may for ever bear: Let it be *JEHOVAH-JIREH*; for the Lord there provided himself a Lamb. And God hath now, for the Space of near 1800 Years, been perceived performing his Promise, in finishing Transgression, and making an End of Sin, by the Sacrifice of himself: Thus, *In the Mount of the Lord it shall be seen.*

Did not the devout Patriarch *Jacob* well perceive in Process of Time, though it was twenty Years or upwards after he had sent his dearest *Joseph*, to inquire after the Welfare of his Brethren at *Dotban*? Did not this potent Prince, that had Power with God, discern the divine Dispensation in the most clear and convincing Manner, when,

with his almost expiring Breath, upon his Death-Bed, he tells a Truth that God had thoroughly taught him? *Gen. xlviii. 11. And Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see thy Face; and lo, God hath shewed me also thy Seed.* Here he freely acknowledges, that he had the fullest Demonstration of the Provisions of Providence. Was it any less evident to his prudent and pious Son *Joseph*, what he perceived of God, when he made himself known unto his Brethren, and with so great Evidence and Energy expounded unto them the Purport of that Scene which was transacted between him and them? *Gen. xlv. 3—5. And Joseph said unto his Brethren, I am Joseph: Doth my Father yet live? And his Brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his Presence. And Joseph said unto his Brethren, Come near to me, I pray you; and they came near: And he said, I am Joseph your Brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you, to preserve Life.* — What masterly and moving Strokes are here given to the Truth we now treat; both he and his Brethren at this critical Time, must perceive the Provision God had made! *Peter, James, and John*, when upon the Mount of Transfiguration with Christ, did not immediately perceive the Scope of this glorious Display; however, in Process of Time, you see what Account *Peter* gives of it, *2 Pet. i. 16—18.*

How little in common do we perceive of God in the variegated and checquered Appearances of Providence!

vidence! Little do you or I, this Day, discern of God's Design in what we are now providentially engaged in! But if we can believe the Text and Doctrine, we may be undoubtedly ascertained, that there shall be a Performance of those Things that have been spoken of by the Lord unto us, and you, in Process of Time, as a People, shall well perceive the Provision that God hath made for you; *in the Mount of the Lord it shall be seen.* — Sometimes the Season of God's shewing us these Things, is very soon after he hath been preparing the Way thereto; he presently makes his People perceive the Performance of his Promise. This View of God will give a glorious Gloss unto that ancient Prophecy, *Isa. lxvi. 8. Who hath heard such a Thing? who hath seen such Things? Shall the Earth be made to bring forth in one Day, or shall a Nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her Children.* — But sometimes it is not so soon that the Lord makes his People perceive the Performance of his Promise. *Jacob* had some comfortable Communion with God at *Bethel*; he had a glorious Discovery of *Immanuel*, and a sure Promise of his Presence, for it was to him the House of God and the Gate of Heaven: But *Jacob* knew not what a Feast this was to be unto him twenty Years afterwards, when God gave him a new Meal upon his old Experience, saying, I am the God of *Bethel*, where thou anointedst the Pillar, and where thou vowedst a Vow unto me, *Gen. xxviii. 17.* It took twenty Years to explain what he met with at *Bethel*: And what do you or

I know but it may take twenty Years or more, in explaining what I am now preaching to some of you? But whether it is sooner or later, it will surely be; and when Heaven sees it best in his appointed Time, which is the best Time for answering the Purposes of his Grace: *For the Vision is yet for an appointed Time, but at the End it shall speak, and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry,* Hab. ii. 3.—But I shall now conclude the Whole in a Use or two.

USE I. This Doctrine may learn us all Sobriety in our Sentiments and Censures, with regard to the Designs of Providence in the Dispensations thereof. When the present Aspect of Providence appears dark, we are too, too apt to determine, that the Issue of it will be as the present Aspect: But, according to our Doctrine, we are premature in this Matter; for though the Commencement of a Providence hath been cloudy, yet the Conclusion of it hath been clear, as in the pregnant Instance before us; a gloomy Morning hath had a glorious Day succeeding it: And, on the contrary, a clear Morning has been succeeded with a black, tempestuous Day; the Sun shone bright upon *Sodom*, the Morning before its Destruction: Therefore be sober, be humble in your Judgment with respect to the Objects of God's Providence. It is a true Proverb, Truth is the Daughter of Time; and it corresponds with what we have been treating, That the Provision which God makes for his People is such as, in Process of Time, they shall well perceive.

USE II. Hence from this Text and Doctrine, we may gather some Flowers of Consolation for the Church of God in general, and for this Church in particular. God, by the Death of your late worthy Pastor, extinguished a burning and shining Light amongst you : You have since been praying incessantly, that He would send you a Pastor according to his own Heart, who may feed you with Knowledge and Understanding ; and accordingly you have been searching the Island with that View, yet still you sit solitary, and in a State of Widowhood : But though this is your present Case, yet our Text affords you Warrant to believe, and me Authority to say, that *in the Mount of the Lord it shall be seen*. The Lord will provide therefore ; cease not to pray, as the Psalmist : Let thy Work appear unto thy Servants, and thy Glory unto their Children. And consider, that God's Time of his making his Work appear is often very unexpected, and contrary to our Sentiment ; when our Night is darkest, and our Darkeness thickest, then is Promise that hath been long pregnant bringing forth, *Psalms cxii. 4.* He maketh Darkeness Light before them : When I sit in Darkeness, the Lord will be a Light unto me. For *Abraham called the Name of the Place Jehovah-jireh ; as it is said to this Day, In the Mount of the Lord it shall be seen.*

 SERMON IV.

EZEKIEL xvi. 63.

*That thou mayest remember and be confounded,
and never open thy Mouth any more because of
thy Shame, when I am pacified toward thee for
all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God.*

MY Brethren, If we are not blind both to our own Case, and the Case of the Church at this Day, we may behold in this Chapter, as in a Map or Mirror, our very original Picture, both as it regards our State before Conversion, and after it; as in Water Face answers to Face, so doth the Heart of Man to Man. Hence the Description that we have of *Jerusalem* in this Chapter, to me appears to be such as answers the Case of Christians in these Times to the very Life. Who can read the affecting Account concerning *Jerusalem's* natural State, in the five first Verses of the Chapter, and not see the deplorable Pickle that we, and every Man and Woman born of *Adam*, are in? Can any again read what we have recorded, from the
6th

6th to the 19th Verse, concerning God's looking upon her, his spreading his Skirt over her, and her Time being a Time of Love; his washing her with Water, his anointing her with Oil, his clothing and decking her; yea, in a Word, his making her perfect through his Comeliness put upon her — Can any, we say, look into all these Circumstances, and not see that these were the very Things which God did for them, when they became new Creatures? Yea, if we were to examine the Account, from the 15th Verse to the End of the Chapter, concerning the monstrous Ingratitude, Whoredom, &c. of *Jerusalem*; why, I am apt to think, even among us, in our Skirts, there might be found some, if not all the Sins that are set forth in this Chapter? — Can we read the Account that we have of the Manner of the Lord's dealing with her in the Day of her Backsliding, in his chastening, exposing her, discovering her Nakedness, and the like, and not see something of the like Nature in his Manner of Procedure with us, who have been Backsliders? Last of all; can we read what we have recorded, from the 60th Verse to the End of the Chapter, concerning God's healing and humbling *Jerusalem*, and not discern the very Soul and Spirit of that Experience, which the People of God have of his Loving-kindness, when he comes to them in the Day of Grace, riding in the Chariot of the Covenant, the Middle whereof is paved with Love for the Daughters of *Jerusalem*: Thou Harlot, as designed in this Chapter, *Wherefore, O Harlot, bear the Word of the Lord?* Particularly in
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the Verse wherein our Text is contained, you may see the Manner wherein the Soul acts when recovered from its Backsliding; it remembers, is confounded, its Mouth is shut, and it is ashamed. See how God acts upon the Soul as the Cause of these good Effects, *when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God.* First, you may note the Person pacified: Second, to whom he is pacified: Third, the Nature of the Blessing, *all that thou hast done*: Fourth, the Reality of it, *saith the Lord God.* What is further necessary for an Illustration of the Text, will occur in the Handling of this Doctrinal Observation from it, viz.

DOCTRINE 1st. That a Sense of Divine Pacification fills the Soul with all true Humiliation.

Method.

- I. I would speak a little as to the Nature of divine Pacification, as we have it branched out in the Text.
- II. Treat a little of that true Humiliation, which the Sense of divine Pacification fills the Soul with, as we have it branched out in these Phrases in the Text, *Remember, be confounded, never open thy Mouth.*
- III. We would give the Reasons of the Doctrine; or shew why it is that a Sense of divine Pacification hath such Influence upon the Soul's Humiliation. And,
- IV. Improve the Whole.

I. Then

I. Then, as to the Nature of divine Pacification, It is very evident, from the Consideration of the Person pacified, *when I am pacified*, the Person who is pacified towards the Church, is he whom she had sinned against in a very strange Manner; who had been provoked with her ungrateful and God-dishonouring Conduct; when he dealt best with her, she thanked him least, and the best of Blessings she abused: And yet God, her best Benefactor, who still loved her, though she provoked him with her Counsel and Conduct; yea, when she had as it were wearied herself out with Sin her Strength, her Day, her Comfort being just at an End; yet, I say, God tells her, the Church, *I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God.* — As a pacified God is a pleasant Sight to the Soul; so an angry God, when he appears to the Soul in all the Terror of his Godlike Nature, is a tremendous Object: This made poor *Heman* to cry out, that he was distracted while he suffered his Terrors. — My Friends, God is an august Sight, or grand, nonsuch Appearance; in whatever Shape we view him, He is glorious in Holiness, fearful in Praises: The greatest of his Saints and Servants, when he hath appeared to them, have not been able to stand the Appearance, even though it was merciful and gracious, because of the Majesty that mixed with it. *Job xl. 6, 7, 9. Then answered the Lord unto Job out of the Whirlwind, and said, Gird up thy Loins now like a Man; I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.*

Hast

Hast thou an Arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a Voice like him? Ver. 4, 5. Behold, I am vile, what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine Hand upon my Mouth. Once have I spoken, but I will not answer; yea, twice, but I will proceed no further. Chap. xlii. 5, 6. I have heard of thee by the Hearing of the Ear; but now mine Eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in Dust and Ashes. Judges xiii. When Manoah knew that it was the Angel of the Lord, says he unto his Wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God. A Sight of God, you see, though in a most favourable Manner, as pacified, for as such did Manoah and his Wife see him, is affecting. Yea, we see what Frame Isaiah was in, Isa. vi. 1—4. In the Year that King Uzziab died, I saw also the Lord sitting upon a Throne, high and lifted up, and his Train filled the Temple. Above it stood the Seraphims: Each one had six Wings; with twain he covered his Face, and with twain he covered his Feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts, the whole Earth is full of his Glory. And the Posts of the Door moved at the Voice of him that cried, and the House was filled with Smoke. — Observe what Frame this Sight put the Prophet in: Ver. 5. Then said I, Wo is me, for I am undone, because I am a Man of unclean Lips, and I dwell in the midst of a People of unclean Lips; for mine Eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts. — Thus, in like manner, when God appeared to Daniel, Dan. x. 5—8. Then I lift up mine Eyes, and looked, and behold, a certain Man clothed

*clothed in Linen, whose Loins were girded with fine Gold of Uphaz. His Body also was like the Beryl, and his Face as the Appearance of Lightning, and his Eyes as Lamps of Fire, and his Arms and his Feet like in Colour to polished Brass, and the Voice of his Words like the Voice of a Multitude. And I Daniel alone saw the Vision, for the Men that were with me saw not the Vision; but a great Quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great Vision, and there remained no Strength in me; for my Comeliness was turned in me to Corruption, and I retained no Strength.—To the same Purpose we may see, Rev. i. 13, 14, 15, 17. One like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a Garment down to the Feet, and girt about the Paps with a golden Girdle. His Head and his Hairs were white like Wool, as white as Snow; and his Eyes were as a Flame of Fire; and his Feet like unto fine Brass, as if they burned in a Furnace; and his Voice as the Sound of many Waters. And when I saw him, I fell at his Feet as dead. — You see also what Frame the three Disciples were in, when upon the Mount of Transfiguration with Christ, inasmuch as they feared: Yea, you will find in the first Chapter of this Prophecy of Ezekiel, in what Frame the Prophet was in, when the Lord God appeared unto him, in the three last Verses of the Chapter. — Now, my Friends, is the Appearance of God such, even when the Soul may expect that he is a pacified, reconciled God, and not in Wrath? What shall we think then it must be to the poor Soul, to view this God in all
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the Shapes of terrible Majesty, not as pacified, but as offended, and angry with it? I do not wonder that guilty Sinners are represented as crying to the Rocks and Mountains to fall upon them, to hide them from the Face of him that sits upon the Throne; for Mountains are light to bear, in Comparison of the Wrath and Anger of this God. I do not think it strange, that *Adam* was running away and hiding himself, like a Thief, a Murderer, or the like, among the Trees of the Garden, when he viewed God, not as a pacified, but as an angry and offended God. O! a guilty Conscience within, and a gloomy Deity without, who can bear? — I knew a Person that was once at some Loss to know the Meaning of these Words, *The Spirit of a Man will sustain his Infirmary, but a wounded Spirit who can bear? And the Arrows of the Almighty are within me; and the Poison thereof drinketh up my Spirits.* He thought that no Trouble was like some acute and painful Disorder, that he had seen some in, and he had shared of. But, O! when he came under the Apprehension of Guilt and Wrath, and experienced these Arrows of the Almighty, he then knew that the most exquisite Pain of Body, Cholic, Stone, and the like, were, so to speak, but like a Prick of a Pin, or the Wound that the fine Lancet makes in the Flesh in the Hand of a tender Surgeon, in Comparison of the sharp two-edged Sword that pierced and cut every Corner of the Heart.— I do not at all wonder to hear a *Cain* crying out, *My Punishment is greater than I can bear,* when he saw nothing of a pacified,

pacified, but of an angry God : Or that *Israel*, at *Horeb*, desired that *Moses* might speak to them, and become the Mediator between God and them ; for so terrible was the Appearance, that even *Moses* said, *I exceedingly fear and quake* ; or, that for Fear of him, *the Keepers did shake, and become as dead Men*, Matt. xxviii. 3. *His Countenance was like Lightning, and his Raiment white as Snow*.—Well, my Friends, it is this God that is pacified towards *Jerusalem*, the Church. And for my Part, I think it as little strange, that such is the Effect and Frame of Mind upon *Israel*, when the Lord shews himself a pacified God to them, than what I think it strange there is such Terror, Fear and Horror, when it is otherwise. Can we wonder that they remember, are confounded, are silent, and ashamed, when God says, I am pacified ? *Jacob* could as little bear the agreeable Accounts, that *Joseph* was yet alive, and Ruler over all the Land of *Egypt*, and had sent for him, when he saw the Waggon ; as he could bear the Sight of *Joseph's* Coat of many Colours, all Blood and Gore : So let me tell you, the Sense of divine Pacification will affect the Soul more than Hell's Horror and Damnation will. It is said of the Queen of *Sheba*, when she saw the Glory of *Salomon's* Kingdom, his House, and the Attendance of his Servants, that there was no more Spirit left in her ; O ! she breaks forth into a kind of Extasy, *Happy are these thy Men, &c.* So when the Church and People of God come to see, that the great God, of such Majesty and Glory, is pacified towards them :
That

That this God is their God, their God in Covenant: That this God, though glorious, will be their Guide even unto Death: That this God is pacified towards them, as *David* said, (when God spake with such Respect of him and his House) *What can David say more? what can David say more? What can I say? can I ever open my Mouth more? It is God, it is the Lord, let him do unto me as it seemeth him good.* It is God that is pacified; therefore though War, as the Psalmist says, *should rise against me, my Heart still fearless is; I will not fear what Man can do unto me.* — What think ye, my Brethren, hath made many weak Men and Women bold as Lions, even those whose natural Weakness and Constitution have been such, that they have been afraid almost at the Shaking of a Leaf; that yet these very Persons should have Courage to go to Prison, to a Stake, or a Scaffold, with Boldness? — What hath been at the Bottom of all this, think ye? why I can tell you, it is what is contained in my Text, *when I am pacified toward thee.* A Sense of God's being pacified towards them, makes them undaunted, though all the World were at War with them, Friends and Foes, Strangers and Acquaintance: And let me tell you, that without some Sense of this divine Pacification, as we will but make poor Christians in any Duty, so we will make worse Sufferers for Christ. *Isaiab* was overwhelmed when he saw the Glory of the Lord; but when one of the Seraphims touched his Lips, and said, *Thine Iniquity is taken away, thy Sin is purged;* why, then

then this makes him very ready and hearty to go on any Errand, and undertake any Hardship for God: *Here am I*, says he, *send thou me.* — What is it, my Brethren, that makes Providences, Dispensations, Mercies and Judgments, have something in them so gloomy and obscure to many Christians in these Days? Why, I am afraid it proceeds from this Defect or Want, of not seeing God a pacified God to them. Christians, in former Times, took joyfully the spoiling of their Goods, knowing that in Heaven they had a better and more enduring Substance. — What makes *Paul*, so to speak, banter Death, and the very Devils themselves? to laugh at Famine, Sword, Persecution, and Reproach? Why, it was the Sense of God's being a pacified God towards him, reconciled in his Heart: *But*, says he, *I obtained Mercy.* And this is one Reason why you see some Christians, when visited with great Afflictions, bearing them with a Spirit of Joy, of Courage, and of Tranquillity, even to the Admiration of others; while other Christians, who have not the 10,000th Part of that Sorrow which they feel; yet cry out at the Hand that is upon them, as if they had a Stab at the Heart, because they have not the Sense of God's being pacified to them: Yea, it is the Sense of this which makes them to die in Peace, Comfort, and Confidence. How do many think when the King of Terrors knocks at the Door? O! how is every Approach of Death terrible to them? it is like the Hand-writing upon the Wall: But the Sense of divine

Reconciliation will make the King of Terrors a King of Desires ; every Trouble, every Ake, every Grief, that are Death's Harbingers ; what Melody will they make in the Ears of the Christian, that hath the Sense of God's being a pacified God to him ? Thus you may see a little of the Nature of divine Pacification from the Person that is pacified, the Lord God.

II. The Nature of this divine Pacification is further plain, if we consider the Persons to whom God is pacified, pointed forth to us in these Pronouns, Thou, Thy, Thee : *That thou mayest remember, and never open thy Mouth, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done.*—

Why, if we take a complex View of these Persons, as we have them described in this Chapter, we shall find that they were in very deplorable Circumstances ; Creatures that no body seemed to care for ; no Eye pitied them, to do any of those Things to them, which they stood in Need of : They were Persons without any Compassion shewn them ; yea, we find that they were most filthy Creatures. You may see what we have recorded in the 4th Verse of the Chapter ; a Creature that was scarce fit to be seen or handled, like as we naturally are when we first come into the World : But they were Persons of base Blood, if I may so speak ; the Place where they were born was so originally : *Thy Birth, and thy Nativity, is of the Land of Canaan ; not Canaan in its reformed Estate, after the Canaanite, the Hittite, and the Amorite,*

Amorite, were driven out; but *Canaan* in its idolatrous Estate; for *Canaan* originally and anciently was no better than other Places: It was base for all the Abominations that prevailed among the Heathen; yea, as the Place where they were born originally, bare nothing beautiful in its Character; so neither were their Parents Persons of any Character; far from it, they were the Seed of Murderers, Thieves, and the like. You know what I mean, for such were *Adam* and *Eve*; yea, it is observed of *Adam*, that he begat a Son after his own Likeness; with that same sinful Likeness, with that same base Nature, and vile Principles, that he was the Father of. But what is astonishing, though they were Persons of this Character, yet they were Objects of the Lord's Love: *And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own Blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy Blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy Blood, Live.* Even when in that natural State, God takes Care to preserve *Jerusalem's* natural Life; she should not die in that Condition, but should be preserved through all the Danger that attends Nature's State, till *the Time*: For you see there was another Time that the Lord passed by, and then he spread his Skirt over her, and her Time became a Time of Love: *I covered thy Nakedness, and swore unto thee, and entered into Covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine.* — Here was one of the remarkable Seasons of the Lord's giving her a Sense of his Love; of that Love which had

been like new Wine in his Breast from all Eternity, and is shed abroad in the Hearts of poor Sinners in the Day of believing : But we are not to think so absurdly of God, as to imagine that it was never in his Heart before that Day ; yea, you see there is Love shewn to her while in her Blood, then he said, Live, even when living in all Iniquity. God was pacified towards the Objects of his Love in Christ, even before they had Existence. There is the actual Manifestation of this divine Pacification in the Time of Love, when he spread his Skirt over *Jerusalem*, and swore unto her, entering into Covenant ; that is, he renewed with the Church, what he had established and entered into with the Head of it before all Time. — But then you will further observe, that those, of whom we speak, were Persons that God had done very great and glorious Things for ; of whom in our Text he says, *I am pacified toward thee. And I washed thee with Water ; yea, I I thoroughly washed away thy Blood from thee ; and I anointed thee with Oil : For thou wast perfect through my Comeliness put upon thee.* — Here you see are all the Symptoms of Pacification at this Season. But though the divine Favour can never be lost, for whom God loves, he loves unto the End ; he is of one Mind, and who can change him ? Yet through Sin, great Sin often repeated, Sins aggravated and heinous, the Soul may lose the Sense of this divine Pacification ; yea, then God is provoked, if I may so speak, as the Father is with his Children, when he sees them do
this

this or the other thing dishonourable to him, and hurtful to their own Souls; though at the same time he dearly loves his Children, his Heart bleeds for them. When he takes the Rod in his Hand, speaks hardly and roughly to them, as *Joseph* did to his Brethren, and he turned himself about and wept; so does the Lord, when he speaks roughly to his Brethren, his Children; yet he turns himself about from them, and weeps: He wants them not to see, but conceals from them these Bowels that are all in Emotion in his Breast. But then the Persons whom God says in our Text he is pacified to, you will observe, after the first Token of his Love shewn unto them, and they had shared largely thereof, yet they take greater Liberties to sin afterwards; and here is as black a Roll in this Chapter, as can well be read of any Sinner. I cannot pretend to number all their Sins, neither set forth the heinous Circumstances of them; they are great as to Number, and very aggravated as to Circumstances, which you will see from an Instance or two.

First, Witness *Jerusalem's* trusting in her Beauty. This was one of the first Sins that she fell into. What God had done for her was to be esteemed, but it was not to be idolized. Even Grace itself, as it is but a Creature, the Christian is guilty of foul Idolatry, if he puts that in Christ's Place. But,

Secondly, Idolatry was flagrant to such Excess, that we find she fell into the Sin of sacrificing her Children, *Ver. 20.* O! sure the Nature of Sin

is strange, for the Love of it will lead the Sinner to most unnatural Acts, as here you see: Yea, it was arrived to that Height, that she committed Fornication with the *Egyptians* and the *Affyrians*, because it is said, she was unsatiable: Yea, so far was her Folly aggravated, that it is said, even the *Philistines* were ashamed of her lewd Ways; they keep to their Gods, their fictitious, foul Gods; but *Israel* had departed from the true and living God. *For pass over the Isles of Chittim, and see; and send unto Kedar, and consider diligently, and see if there be such a Thing. Hath a Nation changed their Gods, which are yet no Gods? But my People have changed their Glory, for that which doth not profit. Be astonished, O ye Heavens, at this; and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord,* Jer. ii. 10—12. But then,

Lastly, *Israel* were after all an afflicted People, Ver. 38. Great and sore Sorrows did the Lord visit them with; for Sin is the procuring Cause of all Sorrow; and if his Children forsake him, the Lord will visit their Sins with Rods, and their Transgressions with Chastisement. He hath known his People above all the Families of the Earth, and therefore he will punish; they may play the Prodigal, but yet he will bring them to themselves, as we find here he did, after all their Sins, Sorrows, and Miscarriages: *For, saith he, that thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy Mouth any more.*

(1) INFERENCE. Hence see a little of the Difference of God's Love to his People, and their Love

Love to him. It is true, their Loves agree in several Things; his Love to them is a Love of Complacency, he delights in them; and their Love to him is a Love of Complacency, they delight in him; he loves them in Christ, and they love him in Christ: But yet vastly great is the Difference between his Love and theirs. 1. His Love is eternal; their Love is but of Yesterday's Date. 2. His Love is the original Cause; their Love is the native Effect of his. 3. His Love is an antecedent Love, it goes before theirs; as the Father loves the Child, when the Child knows not the Father, much less loves him; yea, they are by Nature Haters of God, and surely all must begin on his Side: Herein is Love; not that we loved God, but that God loved us; yea, his Love not only goes before our Love, but before every thing that is lovely in us. God commends his Love, Love towards us, in that while we were yet Sinners, Christ died for us: Sin imports all Unloveliness and Undesirableness that can be in a Creature, yet he loves; but then our Love is a consequential Love. 4. His Love being free and eternal, is always equal and unchangeable, for the Strength of *Israel* is not a Man that he should repent; but our Love to him is unequal and changeable, up and down; his Love is like the Sun, always the same in its Light, though a Cloud may sometimes interpose; our Love is like the Moon, hath its Waxings and Waneings: His Love, I say, is like the Sun, always the same in its Light; it is true, as the Sun is sometimes under a Cloud, so

the Fruits and Manifestations of God's Love may change; now he shines, now he hides his Face, as it may be most for our Profit; but still his Love in itself is the same; whatever Changes affect the Saints, whether as to Sin or Suffering, yet God's Love to them is unchangeable. Why, were it not Blasphemy to say, that God loves his People in their Sinning, as well as in their strictest Obedience; if so, who will care to serve him more? To which it might be replied, the Love of God in itself is no more changeable than God himself. And what then, loves he his People in their sinning? by no means; he loves his People, not their sinning. Alters he his Love to them? no, not his Love, but the Discoveries of his Love; he smites them, rebukes them, and fills them with a Sense of Indignation; but Wo would be to us if he changed in his Love: Nay, he is God, and changes not; therefore the Sons of *Jacob* are not consumed. These very Things, which seem to be the Demonstrations of the Change of his Affection, do as clearly proceed from Love to them as Chastisements. Thus God's Love, being like himself, is immutable, but ours is fluctuating; we are (as a worthy Author observes upon this) scarce a Day at a stand; this Hour we say, *though all Men forsake thee, yet will not I*; the next Hour we say, *we know not the Man*: When was the Time that our Love was equal one Day to an End?

S E R M O N V.

EZEKIEL xvi. 63.

*That thou mayest remember and be confounded,
and never open thy Mouth any more because of
thy Shame, when I am pacified toward thee for
all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God.*

NOW as to the Nature of divine Pacification, we purpose, for the Illustration thereof, to take the Materials from the Text itself; for to me it appears to be exceeding full of it. And hence the Nature of it may be displayed from these Topics :

- I. From that of the Person pacified.
- II. From that of the Person, to whom or with whom he is pacified.
- III. From the Time when.
- IV. From the Latitude and Extent of it.
- V. From the divine Verification of it.

The first two of these Topics we have already treated upon, *when I am pacified*. For clearing
of

of this, you will observe, that the Pacification here spoken of respects that Sense which the Believer hath of it, agreeable to our Doctrine, That the Sense of divine Pacification fills the Soul with true Gospel-Humiliation: And hence it does not so directly respect the Existence, or Being itself of that Pacification; for it is plain, that God was pacified towards *Jerusalem* long before this. Did not he pass by her, and spread his Skirt over her, and her Time was a Time of Love, he swore unto her, and she became his? Yea, did he not discover some Symptoms of his Affection, even when she was in her Blood, in a natural Estate? he then said unto her, Live, though she was highly criminal, and deserved immediate Death; yea, though the Sentence of Death stood as formidably against her as the most guilty Traitor: Yet, if while she was thus, the Great King said unto her, Live; it certainly then bore some Indication of his Affection towards her, even when in her Blood. In the same manner as when a King saying unto a Rebel, Live, shews that he hath Thoughts of Peace towards him; and that these Thoughts of Peace by and by may be brought to Light, when a formal written Pardon is sent to him. But this Pacification exists, and hath a Being in the King's Breast, certainly before there is Evidence thereof given to the Malefactor: So, in like manner, this Pacification, if we consider it as it exists in God, it was certainly in him, and he was pacified towards us in his own eternal Mind, long before we obtained the Knowledge of

of it; yea, it also follows, that if he was pacified in his own eternal Mind towards his Church, before they knew it, that it was, in the strict and proper Nature of it, no transient, temporary Act, God-ward: For it must be, and is a Principle, as clear in Divinity as any Principle in Philosophy, that whatever is in God, was in him always; otherways he could not be said to be immutable, to be without Diminution or Addition. Why then it follows, that if Justice is in God, and is manifested by certain Acts, was not that Justice in him alway? was he not eternally just? or, was there not a certain Time wherein he began to be just? Or, if he is a God of Wisdom, and hath infinite Wisdom, is it to be supposed that he learned that Wisdom, as we do by Degrees, by Books, by Works, by Experience, or such like? No; if it is now in him, we must have a poor Notion of Deity, if we conceive it not to have been eternally in him. Again; do we see that he is a most powerful Being? why think ye, that he had not that Power in him eternally, before he manifested it at the Creation by such and such Acts? Is he then a most loving Being? why then shall we think that he was never so? or that Love was not in him until such Time as he manifested it by some Acts? As little, my Brethren, are we to imagine that God had not this Principle of divine Pacification, before he manifested it, certainly it was in him from Eternity; and his saying, *I am pacified toward thee*, it rather respects the Time when he manifests such and such Acts of divine Pacification

Pacification to his People, than the formal Existence and Being of it in God. Alas ! some Men and Christians dream about a Deity, as they dream about themselves, and think him altogether such an one as themselves ; that as they were not long pacified towards such a Person, but by and by became pacified ; and again, they saw something in the same Person that altered their Mind, then they resolved not to be pacified towards them. Thus Men measure the Almighty by their own Make and Bushel. But as the Lord, our Lord is one, so is he of one Mind, and who can turn him ? whatever was in his eternal Mind, will be in it to Eternity. Was Anger itself in his eternal Mind against such and such Objects ; why then you may believe, that it is the very Nature of the Godhead or Deity not to change ; and it will be in his eternal Mind, and that to all Eternity, against such Objects of his Anger. Thus by the same Rule, was Love, was Peace in his eternal Mind ; or, in other Terms, was he pacified towards such and such Objects in his eternal Mind ; then you may say, in the strictest and sublimest Sense, it was so from Eternity ; and these Objects that he was thus pacified with, he will be so to Eternity with them. — Thus, my Brethren, if we speak of Pacification, as it is in God, we may say, it was in him from Eternity ; and he was eternally pacified, in the same Manner that Anger was in him from Eternity against the Wicked, with whom he will never be pacified to all Eternity. But then, if we treat of this Pacification, as it respects
Time-

Time-Beings, Creatures in Time, we cannot speak of it with any kind of Propriety of Speech in this Sense, but in *that Time, Way*; for though God was pacified towards them before Time, yet it was not possible to make them sensible of it but in Time: They could not be made sensible of it till they were Beings, till they were born. And indeed the remarkable Epocha of Time, or that Period wherein they are made sensible of it, is generally the Time of their being spiritually born. This is what is called in the Beginning of this Chapter, Verse 8. *thy Time*; as if it had been none of God's Time: Or that there were some other Time that was his; or that it was before all Time, Eternity itself was his Time: But *thy Time was the Time of Love*, Eternity was my Time; as if he had said, it is always my Time. But there are particular Times only that thou art sensible of this, *when I am pacified*; such as the Time of Conviction, and the Time after some Correction, as in this same Chapter, *Ver. 41, 42*. Thus this is one of the Times, as the Experience of the Church here shews.

But some here may ask me, how is it that God is pacified, according as you have been describing, and yet shews his Anger? Answer; here indeed we ought wisely to distinguish between paternal, fatherly, judicial, and vindictive Chastisement: Fatherly Frowns are to be feared by God's Children; for, says he, *if my Children forsake my Law, then will I visit, &c.* But the vindictive Fury, Vengeance, and Wrath of the righteous Judge, shall
never

never rest upon them. In this Sense it is, that it is said, *I will not be Wrath with thee, nor rebuke thee*; but not in the other: In this Sense he is still perpetually pacified; but in the other, he will punish as Father; he will not take his Loving-kindness from them, though he will punish. He is pacified as a vindictive Judge, but not always as an affectionate Father, whose Love and Affection for them causes him to frown with Love and Affection upon them. But,

Secondly, We must distinguish between being pacified with regard to the Person, and pacified with regard to his Practice: We may be pacified with the Person, and yet not with his Practice; so, says the Lord, *I will take Vengeance upon their Inventions, but their Souls will I give unto them for a Prey*. He will punish the Persons Practice to Purpose, but yet he will make it appear that he is pacified to the Soul.

Thirdly, We are to distinguish between God's being pacified in point of the Persons State, and his being pacified in point of the Appearance of his Providence towards them. The first may be, and is true, the latter is not.—We make no doubt but God was pacified with *Job* in point of his State; but then in point of his providential Proceedings it does not appear, as he permitted Satan to put forth his Hand and touch all that he had, so he did, only his Life he was to spare: So God may punish a Person in his Providence, and yet be pacified with them in point of his State; which is as precious to him as the Life of *Job*, that he
would

would not permit Satan to touch.—Thus you may view divine Pacification, as it respects the Period of it, *when*; when they were yet in the Womb of the Purpose and Decree of God. Their Election plainly supposes divine Pacification; for who would choose a Person to be his Child, and to give him his Estate, and at the same time hate him, not be reconciled and pacified towards him? So neither did God choose his Children because he hated them, but because he loved them, and was reconciled towards them. Hence it is said, he did not choose you, neither set his Heart upon you, because you were more in Number than other People; but because I loved you, and because I would keep the Oath; because he loved, because he was pacified, and because he would keep his Oath; that Oath which was taken between the Father and the Son, when the Covenant of Peace was between them both. — Again, the Period of Conviction is the first Time wherein God makes it appear that he is pacified: The Love and Peace that he had in his Breast before Sinners were born, breaks out upon them at this memorable Time; and after they had backslidden, and provoked him with their Manners, when he healed their Backslidings, and humbled them, is the Season wherein they see much of divine Pacification. But this brings me now to the next Thing upon this Head.

IV. Which was the Extent or Latitude of the Privilege, *for all that thou hast done*. One would think, that when he here says, *for all that thou hast done,*

done, that she had not done much to displease him; that it was but some slight Offence, which can be passed so easily over, and God become pacified. If a Person hath spoken disrespectfully of us, upon an Acknowledgment we can forgive him, and be pacified: But if he hath not only spoken, but done the greatest Damage to us, hath abused our greatest Kindness, yea, hath murdered our Sons and Daughters; sure, we would find it a hard Thing to forget in such a Case, and become pacified. But indeed, though this hath been the Case between God and his People; yet, which is amazing, he declares he is pacified for all that they have done. And what is it that they have done? Why, what the Prophet *Jeremiah* explains in general; they have spoken and done evil Things as they could, *Jer. ii.* They did and they spoke all the Evil they could; if more had been in their Power, if they could have spoken and done more Evil, they would have done it; they went as far as possibly they could: They committed all Manner of Sin and Blasphemy, except that one Sin, which indeed they cannot commit; I mean, the unpardonable Sin. While yet the Lord says, *Jer. iii. 4. Wilt thou not from this Time cry unto me, My Father, thou art the Guide of my Youth?* so, to the same Purpose, it is here said, *when I am pacified toward thee, for all that thou hast done.* A great All; a grievous All, yet *I am pacified.* You may see something of the Nature of what *Jerusalem* had done in this same Chapter: First, she is taxed with trusting in her Beauty, as in *Ver. 15.* Once she was a Creature
not

not fit to be seen; she was a base, black Creature, what you may call a common Nuisance originally; but she became comely through his Comeliness put upon her, and then she trusts in her Beauty. Some poor, ragged, and diseased Creatures, if you would take them from the Dunghil, so to speak, and cure their Disorder, and put good Clothes upon them; perhaps they may by and by think they are above you, and spit in your Face; they cannot bear Health and good Clothes, without abusing them both; they begin to trust in their Beauty. If some are raised from the lowest Rank in Life to Preferment, presently they begin to reel and turn round, like as if you should take a Man of a weak Head, walking along the Street, and set him upon the Monument of the City; he soon turns giddy, and his Head seems to turn round. Many such Instances there are in common Life, as is obvious to every diligent Observer.

But, O! it is strange that there should be any thing like this Practice, and Sin in Grace: That there should be Youths in Grace, like *Narcissus* in Nature, whom the Poets tell us, was exceeding beautiful, so that he fell in Love with his own Shadow, and died of the Disease. Strange Delusion! but still more so, that the Church and Children of God have doted upon their Beauty, have become proud of their Appearance and Privilege, and have been in Danger of falling in Love with themselves, and their own Things. Why, they have said upon the Matter, We are the People, and Wisdom shall die with us; we despise all

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others:

others: The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are these; stand by, for we are holier than you. Thus *Jerusalem* trusted in her Beauty.

Secondly, As *Favour is deceitful, and Beauty is a vain Thing*; so her Admiration of herself for her Beauty, and trusting in it, was at the Bottom of some very great Abominations: Hence it follows, *and played the Harlot, because of thy Renown; and poured out thy Fornications on every one that passed by thee.* Thus it was, she had become very common in her Baseness to every one without Distinction: This spiritual Whoredom and Fornication of hers was so great, that at length she made her very Beauty to be abhorred, so abandoned had she become, *Ver. 25.* yea, so uncommon was she in her Whoredom, that the contrary was found in her from all other Women, *Ver. 34.* But then,

Thirdly, As she had done base Things, so bloody Things, *Ver. 20, 21.* Pride and Ambition are base Sins, it was for them that Satan was sent out of Heaven: They have made Angels Devils, and Men Monsters, as in *Nebuchadnezzar's* Case, *Is not this great Babylon that I have built?* and he became like the Beasts of the Field. This was her Sin particularly, Whoredom was her Master-Sin; Uncleanness, the Sin that makes the Soul as fit Fuel for Hell-Fire, as Holiness makes fit Vessels for Heaven. But then all this was attended with Blood-Guiltiness: *O God! Thou God of my Salvation;* to be guilty of innocent Blood, is a Sin of a very scarlet Die; it sinks deep, it hath made even Reprobates themselves mad and distracted,

tracted, *Magor-misabib*. Hence, says *Judas*, *What have I done? I have betrayed innocent Blood*. Why, he had not actually shed the Blood, he had only acted the Part of an Informer; he had taken on him that foul Character, yet his natural Conscience could not bear it: The poor Wretch, thinking to flee from that which would follow him to Hell, gets a Rope, and hangs himself. Well, these gross Enormities was she guilty of. Yea and

Lastly, They were aggravated in their Circumstances above the Sins of others: You will see what is said to this Purpose, in the 46th and 47th Verses of this Chapter. Yea, in the 52d Verse, she was advanced to such a Degree of Degeneracy, that she is said to have justified her Sisters *Sodom* and *Samaria*. Yet, notwithstanding all this, such is the Nature of divine Pacification, that for all that she had done, he is pacified towards her; all her Sins, both of Omission and Commission, in Thought, in Word, and in Deed: Yet, for all these Things, *I am pacified*.

V. The Nature of this divine Pacification is further clear from the Confirmation of it, *saith the Lord God*. The Word of a Man would have been too weak a Proof; it would not presently have confirmed *Jerusalem*, that he was pacified towards her for all that she had done, when she had done such dismal Things, as we have an Account of in this Chapter. But when it is with a *Thus saith the Lord God*, it is sure; for the Lips that speak it cannot lie: The Lord God saith so unto us. Not

only what is said concerning the Sin and monstrous Wickedness of *Jerusalem* is true, he did not lay one Thing to her Charge, or accuse her of one Sin or Circumstance, but it was as he said; and hence, as an Evidence of it, he saith, that she should remember, and should be confounded, and never open her Mouth more: And so it shews to us, what is the very Truth concerning *Jerusalem's* Sin, as also concerning his Grace. It is not the mere telling a Tale, without any Truth in it; but such is the Truth of it, that the Time comes when *Israel* shall be confounded, as it were, with the Remembrance and Sense of this, God's great Grace, that he will cause to pass before her. — Further it shews, that the Nature of this divine Pacification is not precarious and uncertain; *God hath said, saith the Lord God, and will he not do it?* yea, before this saying of it, he had certainly thought of it: And when did he think of it? why, from all Eternity. God is Thought itself, and has a Mind that is different from ours. We think, by comparing one Thing with another, that there is a Succession in our Thoughts, and Variations, and Changes, &c. But can we imagine this to be the Case with God? with God, who is one perfect Mind, and hath one perfect, eternal Thought? What God thought, he thought always; he did not begin to think that he would do so and so, as we do; he is not led to think from new and unforeseen Events, but his Thought is one eternal Act of his eternal Mind: And hence it is said, that the *Thoughts and Purposes of his Heart endure from Generation to*
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Generation. Thus he thought of Pacification; and this Thought, as to himself, is his Act; and the Manifestation of this Thought is to us the Declaration of that eternal Act. What was acting in Eternity, comes to be revealed in Time.— But then those Words, *Thus saith the Lord God*, as they have a Reference to divine Pacification, so they also have a Reference to Gospel-Humiliation, *saith the Lord God*. From which I would observe to you, that divine Pacification is not more certain than Gospel-Humiliation; where there is one, there will also be the other: So that the Libertine's Cavils against the Doctrine of Election and such like are groundless, which say, If God hath elected us, if he is pacified towards us, as you have been hearing, why then we may live as we list, we are sure we shall be saved; *Come, let us eat and drink, To-morrow shall be as this Day, and much more abundant*. Why you may here see that this is the Delusion of the Devil, and the Cloud that he would cause to impend upon these precious Doctrines, that have no Concern with them: For God ascertains it with one and the same Breath, that those he is pacified to shall also be humbled; so that if any live and die without some Degree of Humiliation, we have no Reason to think they are Partakers of divine Pacification: For thou shalt *remember, and be confounded, and never open thy Mouth any more because of thy Shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done*.— Now this leads me to the next General Head in the Method, which was

to treat of this Humility, as we have it represented under a Variety of Expressions in the Text, *Remember, be confounded, never open thy Mouth more, &c.* But I must postpone this till another Opportunity; and at present improve what has been said in an Use or two.

USE I. of Caution. We are not hence to conclude, that this divine Pacification cannot consist with paternal Displeasure and fatherly Punishment. No; God hath said, *You have I known of all the Families of the Earth; and therefore, saith he, will I punish you.* It must be an odd Child that never offended its Father; and so indeed as odd a Father that never reprov'd his Child.—The Elect of God, before Conviction, are called the Children of Wrath, even as others; and hence we would have you to observe, that this Pacification may consist even with Threats, with Displeasure, with Anger, and the like. For you are to consider those to whom God is pacified, in a twofold Capacity; namely, as Children of *Adam*, and as under the Covenant of Works; a broken Covenant; the Covenant of Death now to all that are under it: Their Sin and natural Estate expose them as much to Wrath as any Reprobate in Hell, or the Devils themselves, who are reserved there in Chains. But then you are to consider them in Christ, and in the Covenant of Grace; and so they always were, and always will be the Objects of divine Pacification. And there is no more Inconsistency in this, than there was in the Case of Christ himself; who, being considered in two different Capacities, was
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at one and the same time, both the Object of God's Pleasure and Delight, and his Displeasure and Wrath: As he was the Son of God, he was always the Object of his Father's Delight and Love; but as he was the Surety for Sinners, and while bearing the Sins of his People, he was the Object of his Displeasure and Wrath, which he sensibly felt. Thus, my Friends, I would have you think, that Pacification is not of that Nature, as to exclude paternal Displeasure, Punishment, &c.

USE II. Hence you may see how this Doctrine of divine Pacification is adapted to exalt the Grace of God, from the Consideration of the Persons pacified. He might have been in an eternal Flame of Wrath and War with them, even as with Devils and with reprobate Men. O! what could move him to be pacified towards them, and perhaps to be displeased to all Eternity with the Persons that lay in the same Womb with them? *Who can by searching find out the Almighty in this?* but from the Consideration of the Pardon in his Purpose. He was pacified, as you have heard: But the remarkable Time of the Manifestation of it makes it memorable indeed, when the Soul was going on in Sin; yea, when it could not have any Sense or Faith of God's ever being pacified towards it; yea, when it could expect nothing but Rebukes: That even then the Lord should take the base Backslider up in his Arms, and kiss him, weeping over him, and give him his Blessing. — The Extent of divine Pacification, *all that thou*

hast done. O! how doth this exalt Grace? Who sees not the Grace of God far more exalted, in giving out a full and complete Remission of all Sin, than the giving out Remission by halves? as the giving up a Bond at once, speaks out more Favour than giving it up now and then, by partial Acceptances and Discharges.

USE III. See how this Doctrine is adapted to excite to the serious Practice of Godliness, and a holy and strict Gospel-Walk; inasmuch as first it fills the Heart with Love to God, the main Spring of Gospel-Obedience; and is the most powerful Incentive to a tender Conversation. It is true, a Man who apprehends one great Sin forgiven, will love somewhat upon that Account; but he that sees all to be forgiven, though never so great and many, will still love more. Here then are two Debtors to the Grace of God. I think I may well propose that Question, and we may acquiesce in *Simon's* Answer; Surely he to whom much was forgiven. Thus the more we see and know of divine Pacification, the more will we love, the more holy will we live. This Doctrine will constrain us to Duty, with the Cords of a Man, and with the Bands of Love; not for Fear of Wrath, but for Affection, because we have escaped the Wrath to come.

SECOND HEAD. *The Second Head was to treat of Gospel-Humiliation, as holden forth to us under these Variety of Expressions, Remember, be confounded, never open thy Mouth more because of thy Shame, saith the Lord God.*

I believe I did take Notice to you, since I entered upon this Subject, that if we advert and attend to the Authority of the Speaker in this Text, *saith the Lord God*; it is very evident, that the Calumny and Cavils, which are so commonly thrown upon the Doctrines of Grace, are exceedingly groundless; inasmuch as you see it is here ascertained with one and the same Breath, that the Person who hath the Sense of divine Pacification is no Libertine; no, he remembers, and is confounded, and never opens his Mouth. When the Lord gives the Person a first, a second, a third, or a new and renewed Sense of divine Pacification, even others may be sensible of it; for there is a Change very conspicuous to be discerned about him. This observed, we come now to the Point, as expressive of true Humiliation, in our Text.

First then, *Thou mayest remember*. In which Words, it seems to be plainly implied, that Sin weakens Mens Memories; inasmuch as it shuts out the Thoughts of the Things of God (when it runs high) from the Mind. If a Man doth remember such and such a Word of God in Temptation that stood against his Sin, which he is committing and living in; why, the Remembrance is so weak and faint, that it is much like the Memory which a Man hath of Things that he once dreamt of, the Remembrance of them is almost dead: So it is with a Man's Memory, when Sin runs high in the Soul; for Sin is of that Nature, that it distempers the whole Soul, like some Diseases

eases which are of a malignant Influence, that there is no Part or Member of the Body but is infected with the Contagion from Head to Foot; yea, all the five Senses become senseless: The Eye, which was formerly to see, is blind; the Ear, which was made to hear, is deaf; the Nostrials are shut up, that he cannot smell; the Palate is inflamed and excoriated, that he cannot taste; yea, the whole Fabric of human Nature in such Disorder, that he cannot feel. In like manner, is it the Case when Sin is suffered to prevail in the Soul: Why, in the first Place, the Understanding, which is like the Eye of the Soul, is blinded; the Will receives a wrong Bias; the Affections are blunted about the Things of God; the Conscience is untender; yea, and the Memory is lost in a great measure. *Isa. i. 2, 3. Hear, O Heavens, and give Ear, O Earth; for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up Children, and they have rebelled against me. The Ox knoweth his Owner, and the Ass his Master's Crib; but Israel doth not know, my People doth not consider.* Why should you be stricken any more, you will revolt more and more. The whole Head is sick, and the whole Heart is faint; from the Sole of the Foot, even unto the Crown of the Head, there is no Soundness in it, but Wounds, and Bruises, and putrifying Sores: As in a dangerous Illness, every Part contributes to the Corruption of the Whole, so every Faculty of the Soul serves to corrupt another more and more. Sin hath made Man a very Monster, says one; it sets his Heart where his Feet should be: It fixes a
 Man's

Man's Heart upon the Earth, his Heels are lifted up against Heaven, while his Heart should be set on it, *Acts ix. 5.* yea, his Face is towards Hell, his Back towards Heaven; therefore God says, *Turn you, turn you.* He loves what he should hate, and hates what he should love; joys in what he ought to mourn for, and mourns for what he ought to rejoice in; glorieth in his Shame, and is ashamed of his Glory; abhors what he should desire, and desires what he should abhor.

Secondly, *That thou mayest remember*, expressly implies, that though Sin tends to weaken the Memory, yet Grace and the Manifestation of God tend to quicken it; therefore is it here said, *that thou mayest remember.* Grace makes the Man to see Things quite in another Light; for Sin and Grace are such Opposites to each other, as Day and Night, Light and Darknes, and cause as different Appearances. A Thing appears to us in the Dark or at Night, in a different Colour than what it does in the Day; so when the Soul is under the Darknes of Sin, the Understanding views this and the other Thing, as wearing this and the other Complexion and Colour: But when it comes to see it with the Noon-day Sun, it appears then in its natural Light, and of a quite different Complexion; then the Person can say, Whereas I was blind, now I see; whereas I was once in Darknes, now am I Light in the Lord. This was *Paul's* Estimation, *What Things I accounted Gain, now I account Loss, &c.* Yea, the Will, though it was base, yet now it can say, *Lord, what*

what wilt thou have me to do? The Soul, under the Power and Operation of Grace, will cheerfully do that Thing which it formerly hated to do; and associate with the People of God, which it formerly abhorred and despised; preach that Gospel, which was formerly Foolishness unto it; pray to that God in another Way and Manner: Hence *Paul* says, *What wouldest thou have me to do?* Behold, in the first Place, he prays; secondly, he associates with those whom he formerly persecuted; he preaches that Gospel which he condemned. Thus these Actions that were once lovely to the Soul, when under the powerful Influence of Grace, are hateful: *Rom. vii. 15. For that which I do, I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.* Yea, the Affections which were wont to love such and such Sins, when under these Manifestations of God, how doth the Soul lothe them, and itself upon the Account of them! It is surprising to the poor humbled Soul then, how he could like to live and lie, to eat and drink with, and of the same Thing that Serpents, the Snake, the Toad, and Viper live upon; how he could with Pleasure put these in his Bosom, and feed them with his very Blood. Hence it is, that they are confounded, ashamed, and silent. Yea again, the Conscience which was wont to be untender, is, when under the Influence of Grace, exceeding tender, like the Apple of one's Eye, which, if the smallest Atom or Mote get into it, feels exquisite Pain; so indeed is it with the Conscience, that Apple of the Eye of the Soul.

Lastly,

Lastly, The Memory, as in our Text, turns retentive and ripe, with respect to this and the other Thing that was, as if it had been once quite dead and buried. Which brings me to speak yet a little further, and more particularly with regard to this Point of Humiliation, *That thou mayest remember.*



S E R M O N VI.

EZEKIEL xvi. 63.

*That thou mayest remember and be confounded,
and never open thy Mouth any more because of
thy Shame, when I am pacified toward thee for
all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God.*

NOW there are a few Things that I would mention to you, the Soul remembers when under the Sense of divine Pacification, which contains the Quintessence of Gospel-Humiliation: And there are three principal Things that the Person may be supposed to remember, when under the Sense of divine Pacification.

I. His Saviour. II. His Sin. III. Sorrow.

First, He remembers his Saviour, suitable to the Exercises that we find the Church in, *Psalms* lxxviii. 35. *And they remembered that God was their Rock, and the High God their Redeemer.* I cannot pretend to tell you every thing about Christ the Saviour, that the Soul reconciled to God remembers;
only

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only there is one remarkable Thing that he much remembers, and that is in *Cant. i. 4. We will remember*, says the Church, *thy Love more than Wine: The upright love thee.* When the Soul dwells under the deep and divine Sense of divine Pacification, it remembers, in a very moving Manner, the Origin of the Love of God, as being free and sovereign: It remembers how that God did not set his Love upon Sinners, because of any Loveliness in them, or because of any Love in them to him; for his Love is prior to theirs, as the Cause is to the Effect, for indeed he loved them before that they had done either Good or Evil. No other Reason can be given of God's loving his People, but his own sovereign Goodwill and Pleasure, nor ought any other to be sought for. He loves them because he will love them. Though our Men of Reason will scarce sustain this as a Reason, yet it is what the Holy Ghost thought fit to give us, and hence we ought to be satisfied with it, *Deut. vii. 7, 8. The Lord did not set his Love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in Number than any People (for ye were the fewest of all People) but because the Lord loved you, &c.*— Thus when the Soul sees God pacified, he cannot but remember the God-like Cause of it, that there was nothing from without himself that moved him thereunto; Sure there was nothing in me that I can remember, says the Soul, to induce God to love me, and set his Heart upon me, as *Job* speaks, *What is Man, that thou art mindful of him, and that thou shouldest set thy Heart upon him?*

Secondly,

Secondly, The Lord's People remember the discriminating Nature, and the Speciality of his Love, when they have the Sense of Pacification; how he loves them, and not others; this Man, and not the other, which came forth out of the same Womb. It is true, he hath a general Love and Regard to all his Creatures; he is good to all, and his tender Mercies are over all his other Works; they all share in the Bounties of his Providence: He makes his Sun to rise on the Evil and on the Good, and sends Rain on the Just and on the Unjust. But then he hath chosen *Jacob* for himself, and *Israel* for his peculiar Treasure, upon whom he bestows his peculiar Blessings, and to whom he bears a peculiar Love; hence, says *David*, Psalm civ. 6. *Remember me, O Lord, with the Favour that thou bearest unto thy People.* Very plainly intimating, that it was special and discriminating Love, of a different Nature from that which he bears to others: A full Instance of this distinguishing Love we have in *Mal. i. 2, 3.* *I have loved you, saith the Lord; yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's Brother? saith the Lord: Yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau, &c.* And as I said before, no other Reason can be given for this Distinction, which God makes among the lost Sons of *Adam*, than his own sovereign Will: *He will have Mercy upon whom he will have Mercy, and will be gracious to whom he will be gracious.* — Well, when the Soul hath a Sense of divine Pacification, he readily will remember the Speciality of the Love of God to him;

who

who loved me, says Paul, and who hath given himself for me.

Thirdly, Another Thing that Believers will remember in the Love of God, when they have a Sense of divine Pacification, is the Antiquity of that Love: *I have loved thee with an everlasting Love, and therefore in Loving-kindness have I drawn thee.* They remember that there must have been Love in their Election, for Election supposes Delectation or Love: As they readily remember his Love in point of their Election, so in point of Election, or setting up of Christ from everlasting; he was set up as the Mediator of the Covenant from Eternity: As they remember their Election, and Christ's Election, so the Donation of Grace in him before the World began. Again, they readily remember that there was a Disposition made of them, or a putting of their Persons into the Hands of Christ; that there was Security made both for their Persons and Grace. Hence they remember, when they have a Sense of Pardon, and the Antiquity of God's Love, that it did not commence with theirs; neither did it begin in Time, but it bore Date before all Time.

Fourthly, They remember, when they have a Sense of divine Pacification, the Duration of the Love of God; it is to Eternity; it extends from one Eternity to another Eternity: For having loved his own which were in the World, he loved them to the End, he loved them to the End of Time, and will love them to the End of Eternity,

if there could be an End of it. He rests in his Love towards them, there can be no Separation from it: *I am persuaded, says Paul, that neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor Things present, nor Things to come, nor Height, nor Depth, nor any other Creature, shall be able to separate us from the Love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, Rom. viii. 38, 39.*

Fifthly, They will remember the Altitude, as well as Antiquity of this Love; its Eminence, with respect of Degree, as being far above and beyond all other Love; *O! the Height, the Depth, the Breadth, and Length, &c.* They will remember the Longitude of this Love; as in Nature it is not yet found out, so in Grace they will not know it fully; no, Eternity itself will not fix it. They will remember the Latitude and the Circumference of that Love, that it is infinite: Also the Altitude or Height of it; it is not like *Babel's* Tower, nor yet like the Altitude of the Heavens; but far above the Earth, and above the Heavens: The Profundity or Depth of it; which is like the Ocean, or some unmeasurable Gulph, that no Time could ever found the Bottom of. — Something therefore of the Foundation of this Love, will and do they readily remember, when under a Sense of divine Pacification; it appears great in the Conversion of a Sinner, *Eph. ii. 4, 5.* Hence, says the Apostle, *God, who is rich in Mercy, for his great Love wherewith he loved us, even when we were*

were dead in Sin, hath quickened us together with Christ. But in sending of his Son to die for Sinners, it appears exceeding great: *For scarcely for a righteous Man, says the Apostle, will one venture to die; yea, peradventure for a good Man, some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his Love to us, in that while we were yet Sinners, in due Time Christ died for us, the Just for the Unjust: But God commends his Love to the unrighteous Sinner, &c.*

Sixthly, They readily remember the Immutability of this Love, that it is as unsearchable and invariable as the very Nature of God himself; for *God is Love, and his Love is Himself.* Hence it is, that the Blessings of his Grace are invariable, because they proceed from him, who is *the Father of Lights, with whom there is no Variableness, neither Shadow of turning.* Hence also it is, that our Salvation does not stand upon the precarious Foundation which it would do, if his Love to us changed, as ours does to him: But he is the Lord, who changeth not, and therefore the Sons of Jacob are not consumed. God may change the Dispensations of his Providence towards his People, but he never will, neither can change his Delight over or Love towards them. He may chide them, and hide himself from them, but he never will change his Love towards them: *For the Mountains shall depart, says He, and the Hills be removed; but my Loving-kindness shall not depart, neither the Covenant of my Peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath*

Mercy on thee. — Thus in this Sense, you see how it is, when the Soul hath a Sight of divine Pacification, it remembers its God and Saviour.

But then another principal Thing that the Soul remembers at such a Season, is not only its Saviour, but also its Sin. The Remembrance of God, and the Remembrance of ones Sin, go Hand in Hand here : Hence what can be the Reason why *David* says, *I remembered God, and was troubled?* if it had not been upon the Account of Sin, he might have ~~had~~ remembered God without any Trouble, as the elect Angels in Heaven do.— Therefore, in the second Place, there is a Remembrance of Sin, when under a Sense of divine Pacification : I know not whether or not such a Remembrance of Sin, as the Soul hath when he is under the Sense of divine Pacification, be inconsistent with a State of Glory ; but I know it is not inconsistent with a State of Grace. Yea, the heavenly Harpers before the Throne, are represented as tuning up the Song of *Moses*, and the Song of the Lamb : They speak of their Redemption, which plainly implies a Remembrance of their Sin, as well as of Wrath. God is represented as speaking thus to the Damned, *Son, remember that thou in thy Life-time hadst thy good Things, and Lazarus his evil Things ; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.*

As the Damned remember their Sin with all Soul-distressing Agony ; so the Saved and Ransomed of the Lord remember theirs. How, O Child of God!

God! can you remember any thing of the Frame of Soul that you was in, when God said unto thee, as he did to some of his Sons in the Days of his Flesh, *Be of good Cheer, thy Sins are forgiven thee?* We say, did you not then remember Sin with a kind of holy Indignation? the Edge of your Resentment was turned against Sin and yourselves: So in Heaven, I cannot help thinking that it is not inconsistent with the Glory of the Place, and the Holiness of the State, to remember Sin with a holy Indignation, and with high Exultation, inasmuch as the Blessed are now and for ever above all Sin. But more particularly,

The Soul, when under the Sense of Pacification, is like some of the Psalms of *David*, which he intitles, "Psalms to bring to Remembrance;" it remembers all its Sin: Hence, says the *Samaritan* Woman, when Christ had spoken both with Conviction and Comfort to her Soul, *He hath told me all that ever I did*; not that every minute Particular and Circumstance contained in her Life, was told in the short Conference which Christ had with her: But the Meaning is, so much of her Heart and Practice was spoken of, that she as it were saw the Whole of what she had done; her Life was epitomized, so to speak. Thus, though one that hath the Sense of divine Pacification, possibly may not remember every Sin which he has done; yet, so to speak, he remembers something of the Nature of every Sin: If he does but remember one Sin, in that he may remember and see the very

Nature of all Sin; so that all that he has done, seems to be presented to his Sight, as in a Map; and at the same time he sees and remembers that his Sins be a great All, yet they are all blotted out, God is pacified towards him for all that he has done. — Though it is a horrible Consideration to think that all our Sins are unpardoned, an affecting Thought! yet I dare venture to say, that it is not so affecting to the Soul, as the Remembrance of all its Sin being pardoned. But then,

Secondly, As the Universality of Sin is remembered, so the Particularity of it, when God shews himself pacified: Sometimes different Persons have their peculiar and particular Sins, that they remember more than others. The Psalmist speaks of some one Sin, that he represented in the Light of the great Transgression: *Keep back thy Servant from all presumptuous Sins: Cleanse me from secret Faults, so shall I be innocent, and free from the great Transgression.* The Sin of his Youth he prays that the Lord would not remember against him. *Peter* remembered a particular Sin when the Lord looked upon him; he remembered the Word that he had spoke, *This Night, before the Cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice; and he went out and wept bitterly.* — Thus there are particular Sins that the Soul remembers, when under the Sense of divine Pacification; which, though God hath pardoned, yet it can scarce pardon itself, as you may see in the Case of *David* and *Peter*. But then,

Thirdly,

Thirdly, As the Saints remember the Universality and the Particularity, so also the Greatness of their Sin, when under the Sense of Pacification ; and if there is ever a Time wherein Sin seems great, it is when the Soul hath the Sense of the Greatness of Pacification. *David* prays that the Lord would pardon his Iniquity, and a very remarkable Reason does he urge in order to obtain it ; *for*, says he, *it is great*, Psalm xxv. 11. And truly no Sin seems little to the Soul, when under the Sense of divine Favour : It is great Pacification, the Pacification of the Great God. Why then, this Consideration makes Sin to appear great. The Soul is far from that Temper of Spirit, that *Adam* and his Wife *Eve* were in, when they did not know whether or not God would pardon their Sin : They run, you will read, all upon the lessening and extenuating their Sin ; *The Woman whom thou gavest me*, says *Adam* ; *The Serpent beguiled me*, says *Eve* ; so they would lessen the Sin. But, when the Soul hath a Sense of Pardon, this Way of Speaking is quite put out of Doors ; and even in a sinful Thought, then the Soul sees such a Sight, as is enough to condemn a thousand Worlds.

Fourthly, There is the Depravity, Filth, and Pollution of Sin, that the Person remembers. I think this is pointed out to us from the Expression that we have in the first Part of this Chapter, where it is said, *Thou wast cast out to the loathing of thy Person* ; strange Expression, as much as to

say *Jerusalem* was a kind of a Nuisance! There was something so filthy about her, that one could not well come nigh to, nor look upon her without loathing; as we would do when we come nigh some common Nuisance, such as dead Carrion, that is very offensive to come nigh; but not near so much as the dead Corps which is corrupted and putrified, that hath died of some malignant Disorder. — Well, such you see doth God represent the Church to be in her natural State. Hence, when God comes to quicken her, and shew himself pacified towards her, then shall she remember her loathsome Disorder, in the Manner which the Lepers under the Law, after they were cleansed from their Leprosy did, as we have it in the 14th of *Leviticus*, *This is the Law of the Leper in the Day of his Cleansing*. You see what Ceremony was there observed at the cleansing of the Leper, how he was operated upon, and dealt with: So, in like manner, the Leprosy of Sin, which hath diffused itself through our Nature, though it is but imperfectly, or rather partially cured here; yet when there is a begun Cure, how does the Soul remember it, as *Naaman* the Leper did, when the Man of God directed him to wash in *Jordan* seven times? After he had got his Cure, how gratefully doth he remember it? *2 Kings* v. 15. *And he returned to the Man of God, he and all his Company, and came and stood before him: And he said, Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the Earth, but in Israel; now therefore, I pray thee,*
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take a Blessing of thy Servant, &c. Yea, you see how the Leper which Christ cured, in the 1st of *Mark*, near the Close, remembers; though Christ had forbid him, for certain secret Reasons, not to tell what he had done, yet he could not forbear; but began to blaze it abroad, no doubt what Jesus had done for him, how that he was a vile, unclean Leper, but the Christ had cured him.—Thus you see the Soul reconciled to God, remembers its Sin, so as to lothe itself, and to love the Lord.—You may see two Scriptures to this Purpose, in this same Book of *Ezekiel*, Chap. vi. 9. and xx. 43. *And they shall lothe themselves for the Evils which they have committed in all their Abominations. And there shall ye remember your Ways, and all your Doings, wherein ye have been defiled, and ye shall lothe yourselves in your own Sight, for all your Evils that ye have committed.* I cannot help quoting another Scripture to this Purpose, as it is very full of the Doctrine I am now discoursing upon, *Ezek. xxxvi. 31. Then shall ye remember your own evil Ways, and your Doings that were not good; and shall lothe yourselves in your own Sight, for your Iniquities and for your Abominations.* We find that *Job* lothes himself, when he saw his Sore, his Filth, and the Worms in his Flesh, *Job vii. 5.* but not so much as when he saw the Sin, Sore, and Lusts of his Heart, and when he saw that God was pacified to him. Divine Pacification puts the Person to speak, somewhat like *Peter, Depart from me, for I am a sinful Man.* — The amazing Kindness of God, from the very Exuberance of his Grace blessing
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his People, puts them to remember, and to lothe themselves. *Yea*, says another, when under the powerful Drawing of Christ, *I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my Roof. Depart from me*, says Peter, *I am a base Man, a polluted Sinner; I am not fit for thee to come nigh.* *Yea*, says another, *who am I, what was my Father's House, that thou art mindful of me?* — Thus the Lord's People remember themselves, and Sin, so as to lothe it. — Divine Pacification, and the Sense of it, will not suffer them to love Sin, to remember it with Love, but with Loathing and Abhorrence.

Fifthly, They remember upon the Sense of divine Pacification, not only the Depravity and Pollution of Sin, but also the Danger and Peril attending it: Hence they are ready to say, with the Psalmist, *My Feet had well nigh slipped, but thy Mercy held me up.* Thus they remember the Peril and Danger of Sin, and what particular Danger they were in by Sin: They see that the Wages of Sin are Death; it hath slain its Thousands and ten Thousands; and therefore every one to whom God is pacified, and hath the Sense of it. He is ready to say, as those Messengers did that came to Job, *I am escaped alone to tell*, that there hath been a great Slaughter by reason of Sin. And the poor Soul sees that it was equally guilty, and in the same visible apparent Danger with others, and therefore does it remember: *Thou shalt remember.* — O! not remember that it was Sin which was the Cause

Cause of the Expulsion of the Angels out of Heaven, and therefore all the Reason in the World that Sin should keep the Soul out of Heaven. But the poor Soul to whom God is pacified, is ready to remember his Sin, as *Noah* did his Deliverance from the Deluge: He saw the whole World around him covered with drowned Men and Beasts, and every living Thing perishing upon the Account of Sin; but he and his had escaped alone, when the Ark rested upon the Mountains of *Ararat*: And when he and his came out of the Ark, how doth he remember, and that in the Way of Sacrifice? Yea, the poor Soul that hath the Sense of divine Pacification, is ready to remember the Danger of Sin, as *Lot* did his Danger, when he saw Fire and Brimstone from the Lord rained down upon *Sodom*, the Place of his Residence; and his very Wife fixed to the Ground, as a standing Monument of Judgment, when in the Way of Deliverance; and yet the Husband escapes: Surely, he remembers the Danger that Sin exposes to, when his Neighbours around him were destroyed by divine Vengeance, and he escaped. So in like manner, the Soul which hath a Sense of divine Pacification, remembers the Danger that there is in Sin, that it was seemingly in equal Danger with others. "O! says the Person, Sin cast the Angels out of Heaven, and by the same Rule it might have been the Cause of keeping me from it: Sin threw our first Parents out of Paradise, and by the same Rule I might have been for ever debarred from the Pleasures of the heavenly Paradise: Sin
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set Fire to *Sodom* and *Gomorrab*, and so might it have done to the Town or Place I lived in : Sin went about the World, and few considered the Calamities which were universal and common ; so Sin likewise shall bring about the Conflagration of this present World. O ! says the Soul, hath Sin sent a Thousand to Hell before me ? hath it ruined them, both in Soul and in Body, to all Eternity ? hath it made them uncomfortable here, and miserable hereafter ? and am I escaped alone to tell what God hath done for my Soul ?” Sure, you may see now a little how the Person, to whom God is pacified, remembers Sin.

III. Another remarkable Thing that the Soul, to whom God shews himself pacified, remembers, is his Sorrow : *Remembering mine Affliction and my Misery, the Wormwood and the Gall*, as the Prophet *Jeremiah* speaks in *Lamentations*. To the same Purpose *David* speaks, of remembering the Lord from the Land of *Jordan*, and from the *Hermonites*, and the Hill *Mizar*. The Apostle *Jude*, in his Epistle, speaks of putting those in Remembrance to whom he wrote, though they once knew these Things, *how that the Lord having saved the People out of the Land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not*. So the Lord, when he was about to give the Law upon Mount *Sinai*, he prefaces it, so as to put *Israel* in Remembrance of what had been their Sorrow ; *I am*, says He, *the Lord thy God, that brought thee out of the Land of Egypt, and out of the*
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House of Bondage.— And indeed the special Bondage and Sorrow which the Soul was in, prior to the Sense of divine Pacification, is what it cannot well forget, no more than *Israel* could their Sorrow, Affliction, and Crying in the Land of *Egypt*, after they were passed the *Red-sea*, and delivered. Hence *Moses* sings sweetly, and *Israel* with him, upon that Occasion; such was the Sense which *Israel* had of God's Appearance for them, that it induces them to go after him in the Wilderness. The Prophet alludes to this when he says, as in *Jer. ii. 2, 3.* *I remember thee, the Kindness of thy Youth, the Love of thine Espousals, when thou wentest after me in the Wilderness, in a Land that was not sown. Israel was Holiness unto the Lord, and the First-fruits of his Increase.* — God remembers the Kindness of their Youth; and it was the Remembrance of God's Kindness in appearing for them, and delivering them, which made them go after him in the Wilderness, in a Land not inhabited. They remember what God had done, their Affliction and Sorrow were great. As *Israel's* Bondage was great and fore, there was a King arose that knew not *Joseph*; they were under Task-Masters: So Satan, who is the God of this World, who rules over the Children of Disobedience. The Law is a sort of a Task-Master, which requires much Work to be done, but it does not furnish with Materials for working: Hence the Apostle speaks of the Spirit of Bondage, alluding to that State which *Israel* was in in *Egypt*. The Soul, when it is under the Sense of divine Pacification,

remembers how once it was saying, such was the Nature of its Situation, "Can God do this and that for me? Will he bring me out of this House of Bondage? Is not my Wound incurable? Can he deliver me from my tyrannizing Foes, who are like *Pharaoh*, and my Task-Masters, who exact so severely upon me? Can this high, strong, and stubborn Sin be conquered? Can I be redeemed from this Sorrow I am now in? for I am weary alway of my Life, and every thing in Life."— Well, the Lord comes to it in such a Case, and he says, as *Moses* did unto *Israel*, *I am, I am that I am, I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and Jacob. This is my Name for ever, and my Memorial to all Generations.*

Thus, in like manner, when the Lord comes to the Soul, and says, *In an acceptable Time have I heard thee, in the Day of Salvation have I helped thee.* — O! then, how does it remember its former Sorrow? as the Psalmist speaks, *I was brought low, and thou helped me*; or, as he sings in the 40th Psalm, *I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined unto me, and heard my Cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible Pit, out of the miry Clay, and set my Feet upon a Rock, &c.* So *Israel*, in the 137th Psalm, remembers *Jerusalem*, the sweet Days they had enjoyed there in the Worship of God, and they wept by the River of *Babel*: *We sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.* When they remembered the Beauty and Blessedness of *Zion*, they sat and wept.

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Thus, on the contrary, when the Soul sits under the Shadow of the Wings of the most High, and remembers the House of Bondage, its Sin and former Estate, there is weeping; but it is weeping for Joy, like *Joseph's* weeping over his Brethren; he remembered how and how he had been used, what a Sea of Sorrow he had swam in: *And Joseph, when he saw that God was doing all these Things for his Good, he wept aloud.* So when the Soul hath a Sense of divine Pacification, it cannot but remember something of the Sorrow which it has been in; either the present or future Sorrow, that it may be exposed to. “What, says the Soul, does it avail, though Bonds and Affliction abide me, yet none of these Things move me? My God is pacified towards me for all that I have done. Here is the Certificate of my Salvation and Pacification, in capital Letters, in the Bond of God; and it is written further in my Heart: And therefore, though I have Sorrow in my Soul, yet it is not that Sorrow which worketh Death, but it is godly Sorrow. Though I have Sorrow upon my Body, as *Job* had, yet all the Days of my appointed Time will I wait till my Change come: *For I know my Redeemer liveth, that I shall see him at the latter Day; whom I shall see for myself.* Yea, though my House be somewhat like *David's*, much Disturbance and Distress in it, yet it matters not, God hath made a *Will* or Covenant in my Favour; God is pacified towards me.”

Thus

Thus far have I essayed to point forth to you, some of the material Things that the Soul remembers, when under the Sense of divine Pacification, which are productive of Gospel-Humiliation.



SERMON

S E R M O N VII.

EZEKIEL xvi. 63.

*That thou mayest remember and be confounded,
and never open thy Mouth any more because of
thy Shame, when I am pacified toward thee for
all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God.*

THE second Expression which we have in the Text further clearing this, is, *and be confounded*. This Expression, to an intelligent Inquirer, also bears its own Beauty in the Point of Gospel-Humiliation. I find that the Holy Ghost makes use of this Word and Expression *confound*, sometimes to signify *to put in Disorder, to mix, and jumble together*, as in Gen. xi. 7. *Go down, and confound their Language*. The Hebrews were puzzled at the strange Phænomena, how all in an Instant every Man's Language was jumbled; he that spoke one Language the last Word he said, spoke a different the next, so that he could not understand his Neighbour, nor his Neighbour could not understand him. Thus also when we take the Word *confound* in this Light, in the spiritual View

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of it, it is so with the Man which is immediately seized with the blessed Phænomena of divine Pacification: He was just now speaking in a Language quite different from what he does in a short Time thereafter; yea, the Language which he did not understand before, when he heard it, respecting the Things of the Kingdom, he now comprehends it.

In the second Place, I find that the Word *confound* is used in this Sense, namely, *to confute, to baffle*, Acts ix. 22. *But Saul increased the more in Strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus*; that is, he convicted and baffled them. Why, how? To hear and see the Man who was a while ago preaching that Doctrine which he had blasphemed, asserting that Cause which he had persecuted, believing in that Christ which he had contemned, and doing all with a divine Eloquence; this indeed was confounding. In like manner is it with the Soul under a Sense of divine Pacification, as *Paul* was; it not only confounded, that is, convicted and baffled itself, but also others which behold it are confounded. The Soul itself is confounded or convicted, how it is that there should be such a Change upon it; that now its Face should be where its Back was; that it should love the Things it formerly abhorred, and should abhor the Things it formerly loved; that it should rejoice in the Things it formerly mourned for, and mourn for the Things it now rejoices in; that it should be such a Convict of the Grace of God, such a clear Proof of the Truth of that Doctrine,
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which it was wont to decry and gainsay. This, I say, is confounding to the Soul itself, as well as to others.

Thirdly, It signifies *to be much disappointed*; hence is that Expression of *Peter*, *He that believeth shall not be confounded, he shall not be disappointed.* Job vi. 20, 21. *The Troops of Tema looked, the Companies of Sheba waited for them, and they were confounded, &c.* Because they had hoped, they were greatly disappointed; the Thing turns out quite contrary to their Expectation and Hope; hence they are said to be confounded. Why, much the same also is the Case with regard to the Soul blessed with the Sense of divine Pacification; there was little or no Prospect, Appearance, or Hope of it: Once, like *Israel* in a natural State, it was as an Infant cast out upon the Dunghil, in the Day that it is born, to die there; or like the dry Bones which were strewed about the Grave's Mouth, concerning which, when the Prophet was spoken to by the Lord, *Can these Bones live?* says he; *Lord, thou knowest, I know not, there is no Appearance of it; I do not much expect it.* Just so the poor Soul, which was like an Infant thrown out to perish, seemingly had no Hope, Strength, or Succour; or, like a dry Bone taken out of the Grave, which one would think could never live, yet when it doth live, when it is made to rise up, when the perishing Infant is preserved, who can but be confounded and disappointed of their Expectation and Fear? Why, you see the Word, in this View of it, an-

swers the Point of Gospel-Humiliation, *that thou mayest be confounded.*

Fourthly, The Word signifies *to be amazed or astonished*, Acts ii. 6. *Now when this was noised abroad, the Multitude came together, and were confounded, because that they heard every Man speak the Wonders of God in their own Language; though there was there People of all Languages. — But then, in a Thought or two, that thou mayest be confounded.* You have heard that a Thing which hath this Effect upon any, hath some Circumstances attending it that are productive of it. Now let us take Notice of one or two of these Circumstances or Things attending divine Pacification, which makes it have this Effect, *to be confounded.* In the first Place then, this Confusion arises from the Circumstances or Consideration of the Person who shews himself pacified, *I am pacified.* It is the Lord, whom *Moses* in his Song calls a Man of War, the Lord is his Name; it is he whose Throne is in Heaven, and whose Footstool is the Earth; who, with one Frown of his Face, can shake the whole Fabric of Nature; yea, it is that God who hath said, He will by no means clear the Guilty; even that God, who is pacified towards me, a guilty Sinner, the Chief of Sinners. Thus this Circumstance is confounding to the Soul: Yea, God hath swore unto me, that he will not be angry with me, nor rebuke me; it is confounded, inasmuch as this God is pacified; I have Peace, such as the World cannot give, so neither such as it can take away Pacification with,
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and in God. (2.) This other Circumstance, to me pacified, one of the very chief and worst of Sinners, one who, of all others, least deserves any Mercy; as *Israel* could not but think, when viewing themselves before and after Conversion, having fallen into such base Backsliding. (3.) The Season wherein God shewed divine Pacification, when the Soul had the least Faith or Expectation of it, is confounding. (4.) The Nature of it in every Respect is confounding, inasmuch as it is *for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God*; not for some particular Sin, or some which are less than others; but it is for all Sins, the greatest as well as the least.—Hence, I hope, some of you know how it is, that when you have a Sense of divine Pacification, evangetic Confusion takes Place.

INFERENCE. Hence see that Conversion-Work, that which respects Justification and Sanctification, it is not of a slight and superficial Nature. O! my Friends, I dread that there are many deluded in these Days, that hear the Word, and receive it with Joy in a Flash of Affection, but still it is only upon the Surface of the Soul; the Work which they have gone under, it does not sink into, and seize upon the whole Soul, the inmost Soul, and leave its abiding Impressions there. But if you would know a little of the Nature of it, whether or not it is a slight and superficial Work, or if it is a deep and affecting Work, consider but the Terms in the Text, *remember, and be confounded*. Yea, upon a narrow Examination of the Scriptures, I find that this Work of Humiliation

is generally expressed in very strong Terms or Language: Sometimes it is set forth by mourning for an only Son, being in Bitterness for a First-born; those who have had but one Child, a First-born, and that taken from them, you may guess what kind of Grief it is to such, it is not easily or soon forgot. It is called a Breaking of the Heart, a Contrition of Spirit, *Psalms xxxiv. 18. The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken Heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite Spirit: To this Man will I look, even to him that is of a broken Heart, and of a contrite Spirit.* Again, it is called a Renting of the Heart, *Joel ii. 13. Rent your Hearts, and not your Garments.* It is called a Plowing up of the fallow Ground, *Jer. iv. 3. Yea, again, it is called a Travailing in Child-birth, Isa. xxvi. 17. Yea, Acts ii. 37. it is pronounced a being pricked at the Heart: If a Man is pricked in the Foot, Arm, or any other Part of the Body, he can bear it, and survive; but if he is pricked at the Heart with a Weapon, he is a dead Man. Life hath its Center in the Heart; so God deals with the Heart, the Center of Life; hence, says he, I will speak unto her Heart, as here in our Text.*

We come now to the next Word, expressive of true Humiliation, *and never open thy Mouth any more.* Now for clearing this Point of Humiliation, as expressed by the not opening of the Mouth, I would do it by its Alternative, for Contraries serve to clear each other; so Night shews us, or gives us the clear Notion of Day; so Light gives

us the clear Conception of the Nature of Darkness. Here, not opening of the Mouth, which is the same with Silence, gives us a View of the Nature of speaking: And when it is here said, *never open thy Mouth more*; the Sense is, not that thou shouldest be eternally silent, and never say any thing, for those to whom God is pacified shall open their Mouth wide in loud Praises to God: But the Sense is, thou shalt not speak, as thou wast wont to do; thou shalt not open thy Mouth in sinful Expressions, Sin shall be suppressed; for even God's Children, like *Moses*, sometimes speak unadvisedly with their Lips, witness *Job*, Chap. iii. 1—4. *After this opened Job his Mouth, and cursed his Day. And Job spake and said, Let the Day perish wherein I was born, and the Night in which it was said, There is a Man-Child conceived. Let that Day be Darkness, let not God regard it from above, &c.* The Apprehensions which *Job* was under, put him in such a Case, that he did not well know what he said; for you see that when God returned to him, and shewed him his Glory, that the Truth of our Text holds good in his Case, *Job* xl. 3—5. *Then Job answered the Lord, and said, Behold, I am vile, what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine Hand upon my Mouth. Once have I spoken, but I will not answer; yea, twice, but I will proceed no further.* Suitable to the Language of our Text, thou shalt never open thy Mouth in a Way of cursing any of the Creatures, or God's Providence, or in a Way of complaining in the Manner thou hast formerly done; and though *Peter* may open his Mouth in

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cursing

cursing and denying his Lord, yet when the Lord looks at him, he shall desist from that Way of speaking, his silent Tears shall tell the Sense of his Sin.

First, Sometimes Men open their Mouths in idolatrous Speeches, as we find *Israel* did, when *Moses* was upon the Mount with God, and had tarried longer than they expected; say they to *Aaron*, *Up, make us Gods which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the Man that brought us up out of the Land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him*, *Exod. xxxii. 1.* In like manner did *Israel* speak, *Hosea ii. 5.* *For she said, I will go after my Lovers, &c.* There is much of these idolatrous Openings of the Mouth among God's Children; they are ready to say, as *Micah* did, *Ye have taken away my Gods from me, and what have I more?* "O! says the Person, what shall I do? for I have had such and such a Loss, a Father, Mother, Wife, Children, Friends." Such a Loss has the Man had of Goods, of Money, and the like, that he is apt to say, *Ye have taken away my Gods: But when God gives a Sense of divine Pacification under such Losses, then the Soul can be silent, as that Gentleman, who blessed God that he had lost his Estate; for he thought, if he had not lost his Estate, he would have lost his Soul. — Hence, however much we are apt to idolize any Creature, and express ourselves idolatrously with regard to it; yet when God arises, we shall be silent, as Jerusalem here was: Whatever the Lord hath done to us or ours, Aaron held his*

his Peace because the Lord had done it. We cannot open our Mouth in the Manner we would otherwise do.

Secondly, Sometimes we open our Mouths in a haughty, proud Way and Manner. These are Words which the Apostle *Jude* calls great, swelling Words; like a proud *Pharaoh*, we open our Mouths thus, *Who is the Lord, that we should obey him?* Pride makes a Man open his Mouth much in his own Praise. *We are the People, and Wisdom shall die with us. Stand ye by, for I am holier than you.* — Well, but the Soul, when under the Sense of what I have been speaking of, will in a great measure be done with opening its Mouth in a Way of praising itself, and rather say with *Job*, *What is Man, that thou shouldest magnify him;* or, *that thou shouldest set thy Heart upon him? behold, I am vile:* Or, with *David*, *Who am I, or what was my Father's House?*

Thirdly, Sometimes Men are apt to open their Mouths in a self-justifying Way, like the young Man in the Gospel, who came unto Christ, and said, *All these Things have I kept from my Youth up, what lack I yet?* or, like the Pharisee, who thanked God, that he was not like other Men, no Extortioner, unjust; that he fasted twice a Week, and gave Tythes of all that he possessed; that he was not like other Men, nor even as the Publican. So, in like manner, are Men apt to thank God, that they are so and so.—Well, but when the Soul comes to know the Nature of this Doctrine, it will not be disposed to open its Mouth in Self-Justification.

Justification; but rather say, *In me, that is, in my Flesh, dwelleth no good Thing, for to do Evil is present with me*: Yea, it sees its own foul Face in the Glass of other Mens Sins; so, instead of justifying itself, says, *What have I that I have not received? and if I received it, wherefore do I glory as if I received it not?*

Fourthly, The Soul is apt to open its Mouth in an unbelieving Way, like *Israel*, can he give Bread in the Wilderness? can he furnish a Table? In like manner the Soul opens its Mouth, “Can he save me? can he redeem me? can he sanctify me? can he conquer such and such an unconquerable Corruption? Surely, one Day or other, I shall fall by the Hand of mine Enemy.” — Well, but when God comes and gives the Soul a Sense of Pardon, then it ceases to open its Mouth in this Manner, and can say, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.”

Fifthly, It is apt to open its Mouth in a Way of murmuring or complaining against God, his Providence, his Servants, &c. *Exod. xvi. and xvii. Would to God we had died in the Land of Egypt, say they, while we sat by the Flesh-Plots. And the Children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron.* See how they opened their Mouths at *Massah* and at *Meribah*; they tempted the Lord, saying, *Is the Lord among us or not?* — Thus, at Times, the Christian is ready to murmur and to complain of God, of his Ministers, and Providence. But this will be suppressed when God appears; and when the Soul hath a Sense of Pardon,

don, it will be silent, and say with the Prophet, *I will bear the Indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him.* Shall I not bear some small Temptations, inasmuch as God is pacified towards me?

Sixthly, Men are apt to open their Mouths in a Way of Anger: But this they shall not do under the Sense of divine Pacification, *thou shalt never open thy Mouth more.* The peevish, passionate Prophet did open his Mouth in this angry Mode: Says the Lord unto him, *Dost thou well to be angry? yea,* says he, *I do well to be angry even unto Death.* He was angry and murmured because of the Gourd. So it is because of something or other that we murmur, are fretful, discontented, and angry; perhaps something which you have been deeply interested in, did not turn out according to Expectation, your Hopes and Labour are lost, yea, your Name suffers, and such like in the Event; therefore you are apt to open your Mouth in a quarrelling Manner, like *Jonah*, when God did not destroy *Nineveh* after forty Days, how displeased is he, he even quarrels with God's Mercy! Yea, sometimes People are apt to open their Mouths in this murmuring Manner, because God hath settled them in such a Place of the World, and among a People which they have no Pleasure in; *Lot's* righteous Soul was vexed from Day to Day, while he dwelt in *Sodom*; and the Psalmist says, *Wo is me, that I sojourn in Mesbeck, and dwell in Tents of Kedar.* — Thus People are apt to open their Mouths in this Manner; but when God
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shews the Nature of divine Pacification, and their Property in it, they will be silent, and not open their Mouths. — Sometimes the People of God are apt to open their Mouths in this murmuring Manner, truly because of the mean Circumstances they may be in in Life; it hath sometimes been the Case, that they could scarce get Food and Raiment; while others have had all Fulness, they have suffered, and hence they murmur upon this Account. Well, but when they have a Sense of divine Pacification, they can say, with *Paul*, that they have learnt in whatsoever State they are in, therewith to be content. Who can but be so that hath the Lord for his God! — God deals with many of his dear Children, as he did with *Israel* in the Wilderness every Night; they had not a Mouthful of Meat in the House, they had no Way to get it in the Wilderness; but that he might make them dependent upon him for their daily Bread, Day by Day he rained it down about their Tent-Doors; and if they gathered too much one Day, it stunk before the next Morning, Worms were bred in it; so that he who gathered much had nothing over, and he who gathered little had no lack. — Thus indeed what God gives, he would have you see it drops from Heaven: And why you have so small an Allowance, it is because he would have your daily Dependence upon him; yea, if you had more largely, it is much if it did not stink, and Worms breed in it; more than the Measure and Omar which God hath appointed is worth nothing: And when you see these Things, you will not open
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your Mouths. — Again, some murmur because God denies them the Things which they very much desire. This was the Case with *Rachel*, when the Lord refused to give her Children; says she, *Give me Children, or else I die*. Well, she gets what she covets, but not for her Comfort, for she died in Child-bearing; and, instead of the Child's being a *Barnabas*, a Son of Consolation, she called him *Benoni*, a Son of Sorrow.

Thus, my Friends, if God gives us what we would at one Time, he takes away that which is better for us; and when the Soul comes to have a Sense of divine Pacification, it will put a Blank into God's Hand, that he may fill it up as he pleases: Its Mouth then is stopt, it chooses not to be its own Carver in the Course of Providence, lest it should cut its Fingers: It sees it was like a Child crying for a Knife, or a Candle to be put into its Hand, while it coveted those Things which were not at all safe for it: It sees if it had its own Lot, and the Lot of others to cut out, it would make very crooked Work of it; *Phaeton* like, it would set Fire to the World. — Well, but when God gives a Sense of the Doctrine discoursed of, then will the Soul not open its Mouth any more.

USE. Hence see that Pride, Petulance, and Passion, are the very Antipodes to the Grace of God's Spirit: And when great Grace is shed abroad upon the Heart, these Things are brought down apace, as the Prophet says, *Then shall be brought down every high Thought, and every Imagination,*

gination, and every thing that exalts itself against the Knowledge of God. The Lord alone will be exalted in that Day.

Again, People are apt to open their Mouths thus, in an angry, murmuring Tone, truly because the Lord hath deprived them of some certain Comfort of Life they had much Pleasure in, which was very near and dear unto them, such as a loving Husband, an indulgent Parent, or a pleasant Child ; hence they are apt to open their Mouth, as the Prophet did with regard to the Gourd, which grew up in one Night, and was gone the next ; he was exceeding glad for the Gourd one Day, and was as much grieved for it the next : So we, because some goodly Enjoyment is gone from us, which was wont to give us Joy, we grieve, and hence are apt to open our Mouths amiss in this Matter. It is indeed afflicting to have our best Friends, our dearest Enjoyments, our choicest Comforts, taken from us ; but yet it is very unjust that we should open our Mouths against God in this Matter. But when God discovers to us his Love, our Mouths then, instead of being open against him, will be open against Sin, and against ourselves, as the Prophet, in the *Lamentations*, says ; *The Crown is fallen from our Head : Wo unto us that we have sinned.* When the Soul comes to see how many times it hath been the Instrument of provoking the Lord to remove from it some dear and singular Comfort of Life, because it did not prize the Privilege it enjoyed, it did not regard the Example of such pious Parents
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which the Lord privileged it with, but broke and grieved their Spirits; it would not listen to the wholesome Counsel of some Christian Friend; it did not value the Doctrine of some Gospel-Minister, or the like: Hence the Lord hath taken them away, and the Soul has them not to go to, to get their Counsel and Direction in Matters of Conscience.

Hence, instead of opening our Mouths against the Lord, because of what hath taken Place in his Providence; it will rather be against ourselves, that we have been the unhappy Instruments of provoking the Lord to take such Measures with us; and therefore we will be disposed to say, that he hath punished us less than our Iniquities deserved. It is unworthy of the Character of a Christian to murmur so against the Lord, when he deprives him of some dear Enjoyment, acting sometimes rather like a Creature in a Fit of Distraction, than a Believer in Christ. How many appear in this Point to be of *David's* Disposition, or of *Jacob's*? *David*, when he heard of the Death of his Son, says, *I would to God I had died for thee, my Son Absalom.* O! *David* here opens his Mouth against the divine Decree, and to the Detriment and Hurt of *Israel*. *Jacob* says also to the same Purpose—*Me you have bereaved of my Children: If I am bereaved, I am bereaved. Joseph is not, Simeon is not, and you would take Benjamin also: All these Things are against me; and my gray Hairs you will bring down with Sorrow to the Grave.* Here the Servant of the Lord said too much; opened his Mouth

Mouth against God in this Matter : But when he came to *Goshen*, and saw his Children, and was stated in the pleasantest Part of the Land, I suppose he ceased to open his Mouth in the Manner which he had formerly done. — Well, we are apt to open our Mouths against God in such a Case as this. But will we thus open our Mouths, when we come to see that God hath deprived us of this and the other Comfort, which, if he had continued with us, it might have proved the greatest Cross in the World unto us ? God hath taken away one Comfort, in order that you might not have a Multitude of Crosses. Surely, the Lord hath taken away such a Comfort from you, in order that you might not set your Affections upon any dying Enjoyment, but on him, who is the God of all Consolation, whose Comforts are neither few nor small. Hence, instead of opening the Mouth, when God lets the Person see how Things are, and his Love towards him, he is like the *Shunamite*, which we read of in 2 *Kings* iv. 26. When she had lost her Son that she had received of the Lord, which she had received in a very signal Way ; how doth she express herself, when the Prophet inquires after her Welfare ! *Is it well with thee ? is it well with thy Husband ? is it well with the Child ? And she answered, It is well.* — “ So, says the Soul, which hath a right Sense of God’s Way, He gives, and he takes away, blessed be his Name : It is the Lord, let him do unto me what seemeth him good. It is all well in point of his Sovereignty, all well in point of his Faithfulness,

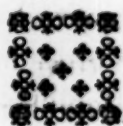
ness, for in very Faithfulness he hath afflicted; all well in point of his Righteousness, all well in point of his Wisdom, and all well in point of his Love and Grace.

Again; People are apt to open their Mouths in this murmuring Way, because of the many and great Temptations which attend them: *Peter* himself was not Proof against the powerful Temptation with which he was attacked. And indeed, such are the Number and the Nature of those Temptations the People of God meet with, that it may be said of them, as in another Case, who is sufficient for these Things? So who indeed is able and sufficient to stand it out without something amiss, if he is not supported by special Grace, when tempted?— The Soul is sometimes ready to storm against God, when under some peculiar Temptations, even to quarrel with his Word, and with his Works. Well, but when the Soul hath the powerful Sense of divine Pacification, it ceases to open its Mouth in the Manner it did while under Temptation, for now it sees that Temptation is one great Part of the Christian Exercise: Hence it is, that those Worthies, of whom the World was not worthy, wandered about in Sheep-Skins and Goat-Skins; they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted. And further, the Soul is made sensible, by this and the other Temptation, of its own Weakness and Misgiving. Was our Strength never tried, we should not so well know what it amounted to; for, according to the Proverb, we are all good untried. Even

an Apostle may have a greater Opinion of his Strength, than what it turns out to, when proved, as you see in the Instance considered with regard to *Peter*.

Again, Lastly upon this Point; How apt are the People of God to open their Mouths upon the Account of that Success and Prosperity which attend the Wicked, while a Sea of Sorrow falls to the Share of the Saints to swim in? This was *David's* Exercise: Hence was he ready to tax God with his Conduct, *Wherefore do the Wicked prosper?* but God's Presence in his Sanctuary set him to Rights as to this Matter. It is natural for us to throw Reflections, when we observe one to favour his Enemies, pay them all outward Respect, and so forth; while yet not so much as to take Notice of their Friends, or perhaps no further than in frowning upon them: This is ready to stir up our Resentment.—Well, in like manner, when the Lord in his holy Procedure seems to favour those that are his Enemies, and to frown upon those that are his Friends, as to the outward Conduct of Providence, his People are ready to open their Mouths against this; but then, when God shews himself pacified to them, they at the same time see that God is dealing here with them, as *Abraham* did with his two Sons, the one the Son of the Concubine, and the other the Son of the true Wife: To him who was the Son of the Concubine, he gave him his Portion, and sent him away; but he who was the Son of the true Wife, he reserved the Inheritance for him. So, in like manner,

manner, the Men of the World have their Portion commonly here; he gives them it, and sends them away, while he reserves the Inheritance for the true-born *Isaacs*, Children of the Promise. — Frequently the Wicked have all the Heaven here, that ever they shall have; as Christ said of the Hypocrites in the Days of his Flesh, that did their Works for to be seen of Men, *Verily they have their Reward*: So they have their Reward, and a poor one indeed, a little Pelf, or a Puff of popular Praise. Well, when the Children of God come to see this, they think themselves the Children of the Family, that do not fare full so well in common as the Stranger, who had much Courtesy and Kindness shewn him for once and away; but God's Goodness is constant as to them. Thus when these Things are seen, and the Soul hath the Sense of them, it can never open its Mouth any more.



S E R M O N V I I I .

EZEKIEL xvi. 63.

*That thou mayest remember and be confounded,
and never open thy Mouth any more because of
thy Shame, when I am pacified toward thee for
all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God.*

NEXT, *because of thy Shame.* This, you see, is brought in as a Reason why they should not open their Mouth, because of Shame. Shame, you know, sometimes makes us silent: It is an Affection Shame, which ariseth by reason of some Things that the Person is conscious are wrong, or that he hath been guilty of. But it is an Affection, or a Phrase which the Spirit of God makes use of here, in order to point forth the true Nature of Gospel-Humiliation; for it hath various Ways; sometimes of remembering, as you have heard; sometimes in the Way of Confession, and sometimes in a Way of Silence, and sometimes in a Way of Shame; fuitable to what the Apostle speaks of, 2 Cor. vii. 11. *For behold, this self-same Thing that ye sorrowed after a godly Sort, what Carefulness*

fulness it wrought in you, yea, what Clearing of yourselves, yea, what Indignation, yea, what Fear, yea, what vehement Desire, yea, what Zeal, yea, what Revenge! In all Things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this Matter. — But further, this Shame ariseth from the Consideration of God's uncommon Kindness and Grace, as well as from the Consideration of the Creature's Unworthiness, for they go Hand in Hand; these too and Shame can never be, but where there has been Sin; for you see in Innocence, though our first Parents were naked, yet they were not ashamed, *Gen. ii. 25.* but as soon as Sin entered, Shame also came in at the same Door, as the Fruit of that filthy Evil, Sin.

Howbeit, the Shame which is spoken of here in our Text, I do not take to be a Sin, but to be the Grace that operates in the Soul, upon a two-fold Account. 1. Because of the great Grace of God granted to it. 2. Because of its great Unworthiness of that Grace. — Hence the Soul is ashamed, somewhat like the Frame of Soul which the Patriarchs were in, when they were in *Joseph's* Presence, and he had made himself known unto them: It is said, they were troubled at his Presence, when he told them who he was; all the Affections of their Souls were then wound up to the highest Pitch to think, Is this the Person, our very Brother, whom we sold into *Egypt*, and acted so unnaturally to, that is now shewing us all this Kindness? that is bidding us not grieve upon that Consideration? that is now falling upon our

Necks, and kissing us? Why, you may easily guess, that though there was great Joy among those Children of *Jacob* at this Time, for they wept for Joy mutually, he fell upon his Brethrens Necks and wept, and they upon his; yet there must have been a World of Shame, to think that they had used their Brother in such sort, his Kindness makes them ashamed of their Sin. So, in like manner is it the Case with the Soul, when the Lord comes and makes a Discovery of himself unto it, and tells it that he is its Brother, be not now grieved at what has taken Place, truly the poor Soul is full of Shame: Or it is somewhat like the poor Woman, who after she had spent all upon Physicians, she stole a Touch of Christ, and was cured; upon which Christ says, *Who toucheth me?* for I perceive that Virtue is gone out of me: Why, the poor Woman, ashamed of what had been her Disease, and of the Uncommonness of the Cure, went to him herself; but fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him the whole Truth. So is it the Case with the poor Soul who hath received the Sense of divine Pacification; it sees such to have been the Greatness of Grace, and the Greatness of its Guilt, that it cannot but remember and be confounded, and never open its Mouth, because of its Shame. Now, my Friends, I have essayed to explain to you the Nature of Gospel-Humiliation, and the Doctrine of divine Pacification, from this Text.

1. Hence

1. Hence learn, that the Doctrine of Self-Denial is not only difficult, but very opposite to our Nature.—There are a great many in the World, who are not willing to be deprived scarce of the most insignificant Thing in Life for Christ; then there are others again that will part with a little for him, what they apprehend the losing of will not do much Harm: But how few are there who have such a Sense of divine Pacification, that they would never open their Mouths, though they were called to part with all, with their very Lives? O! this is what Nature can never bring us to, but divine Grace can.

2. Learn, that the Lord's People are not constantly under the divine Exercises of Grace, that they never open their Mouths. No; for my Part, I must own that is a Sort of Excellency which I am unacquainted with truly; to which of the Saints will such Men turn, as pretend they are always so good, so holy: The whole Current of Christians testify against this Delusion.

3. See the Imperfection of the Work of Sanctification in this Life.

The *third* Head in the Method, was to shew the Reason of the Doctrine; or whence it is, that the Sense of divine Pacification hath such Influence upon Gospel-Humiliation.

First, then, It is so because of that Knowledge and Acquaintance which the Soul comes to have of God upon the Sense of divine Pacification;

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hence, we say, follows Gospel-Humiliation. Solomon tells us, that *he who increaseth Knowledge, increaseth Sorrow*; that is, he that increaseth in the Knowledge of Persons and Things, proportionably will his Sorrow increase, and make him cry out, as he did, *Vanity of Vanities, all is Vanity and Vexation of Spirit*. The more we increase in Knowledge of the State of this present Life, World, and the Wickedness of it; and the more that we increase in the Knowledge of ourselves, our Sin, and the desperate Deceit of our own Hearts; I dare to say, our Sorrow will also increase: And also, the more that we increase in the true Knowledge of God and of Christ, of Course Sorrow of a godly Sort will increase. Well, in like manner, he that hath the Sense of divine Pacification; yea, he who hath the greatest Sense of it as to Degree, the deeper will his Humiliation be: This is what ariseth from the Knowledge, and particular Acquaintance with, and Interest in the Doctrine. The Person who hath no Sense or Knowledge of divine Pacification; I mean in the first Place, even with regard to the Theory of it, or the Being of the Doctrine itself; he does not know whether or not there is such a Thing; it is impossible that such a Person can be filled with true Humiliation. On the contrary, such are frequently found to be self-righteous Persons, proud; and, in the Place of Humiliation, there is much Haughtiness: For Instance, take a poor Blackguard, a Beggar in Rags, who is ignorant of the Doctrine of divine Pacification,

cation, and reprove him for his Sin; instead of being humbled at such a Reproof, he shews his High-mindedness, swelling like a Toad with the Poison of Pride, and the like; and instead of being filled with Humility, when he is convicted of Guiltiness, he is filled with Rage, Anger, Wrath, Resentment. And what is the Reason of this, my Brethren? Alas, it is because the Man knows not the Meekness of divine Pacification; otherwise he would remember, and be confounded, and never open his Mouth more, because of his Shame: He knows nothing of the Nature of this humbling Doctrine, and hence he is high-minded. Well, neither can a Man have Gospel-Humiliation for such and such Sins, especially such Heart-Sins which he accounts venal Sins, or no Sins; while one thinks himself not guilty, it is to be supposed he never will be found to take Shame to himself; so neither will nor can the Person, who hath not some Knowledge and Interest in this Doctrine, and that is exercised, as in our Text. Yea, further I may grant, that though the Person hath the speculative Part of the Knowledge of the Truth of this Doctrine, yet if he hath not the *persuasive* Part, that it is particularly true with respect unto himself; it is not to be supposed that such a Person either will or can be found employed as in our Text. No; a Man may have all Knowledge, that is, literal, and yet be spiritually a Fool: *For the natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit; neither indeed can he, because they are spiritually discerned.* Yea, you have heard that the Devils

Devils knew Christ in the Days of his Flesh, *We know*, say they, *who thou art; the Son of the most high God: Art thou come to torment us before the Time?* But alas, they knew that they had no Share in the Doctrine of divine Forgiveness; and therefore there is nothing of Gospel-Humiliation upon the beholding of the Son of God. So neither, my Friends, can such have true Humiliation, who have not some Expectation that the Doctrine holds with regard to themselves in particular as Individuals. What is the Reason there is so little, so very little of Gospel-Humiliation to be seen among many, who are Professors of the Gospel of Christ, but, on the contrary, Evil-speaking, Backbiting, Whispering, Censuring, and such like? Alas, some Professors may pretend what they please, with respect to the Liberty and Licence which they allow their Tongues, saying, *Our Lips are our own*, who is Lord over us? But were they under a deep Sense of the Doctrine of divine Pacification, and their particular Interest therein, they would remember, and be confounded, and cease to open their Mouths in this Manner.— Therefore we here observe unto you, that the Reason why divine Pacification hath such Influence upon Gospel-Humiliation, is, because of that Knowledge and Appropriation which the Soul hath of this Doctrine, with regard to its own particular Self, when it can say of it in an appropriating Manner, *Who hath loved me, and who hath given himself for me*; then is the Soul melted down in deep Humiliation. You see how *Thomas* acted

acted, how hardened like he was, until such Time as Christ condescends to give him sensible Knowledge of himself; then *Thomas* cries out, *My Lord, and my God!* then the Man is melted down. What was the Reason why *Paul* was so puffed up with his Pharisaic Righteousness? why, it was because he knew not the Righteousness of God, by and through Faith; and till such Time as it pleased the Lord to reveal himself to and in him, he was alive without the Law, he was lifted up: But when once he attained to the Knowledge of the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ, why then, how humble is he? *all is but Loss and Dung, &c.* When the Lord cried to him, and said, *Why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the Pricks.* *Who art thou,* says he, *Lord? I am Jesus of Nazareth.* Then see the Effect; he falls down, he was blind, and he beseeches the Lord to shew him what he should do. — Thus, my Brethren, the Reason why the Sense of divine Pacification hath such Influence on Gospel-Humiliation, ariseth from that Persuasion which the Soul hath of its Interest therein. The passing of a late Act of Grace with respect to Insolvency, many Debtors have read the Paragraph in the public Papers; but as they were not Persons concerned therein, so they have little Concern upon the Account of it: But to the poor Prisoners who have lain these many Years in some of the King's Prisons, when they come to know that they are the particular Persons intended therein, it is like a Jubilee unto them, they overflow with Joy. So, in like manner, is
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it the Case with respect to the Point in Hand; those that do not know their particular Interest therein, cannot have that particular Exercise, which those have to whom God hath said, *I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done.*—When the Lord made *David* sensible of what he would do for him, and for his House and Family after him, *David* is drowned in the Depths of Humiliation; *Who am I*, says he, *and what is my House, that thou hast brought me hitherto! And this was yet a small Thing in thy Sight, O Lord God! but thou hast spoken of thy Servant's House for a great While to come. And is this the Manner of Men, O Lord God! And what can David say more unto thee? for thou, Lord, knowest thy Servant.* Here *David* is melted down to the Dust in Humiliation; the Sense of divine Pacification did so: But alas, what would the telling of this do to one who had no Interest in such Blessings? It is the Sense of Interest which causes such Influence.

Secondly, Another Reason why the Sense of divine Pacification hath such Influence upon Gospel-Humiliation, ariseth from the Greatness of the Privilege of Pacification itself: It is the great God who is pacified; great Sinners, with whom he is pacified; and it is great Pacification in itself. All which, when the Soul comes to have a Sense of, he cannot but be melted into Gospel-Humiliation: Great Causes have great Effects, and the Effect partakes of the Nature of the Cause; for there is nothing in the Effect, which was not formerly in
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the Cause: The Stream which flows from the Fountain, partakes of the Nature of the Cause, the Fountain itself. So, in like manner, the great God is the great Agent and Cause of Pacification; and when he gives the Soul the Sense of it, it cannot but produce the Effect of deep Humiliation. "What! says the Soul under the Sense of Pacification, is it that God who hath measured the Waters in the Hollow of his Hand, and meted out Heaven with a Span, and comprehended the Dust of the Earth in a Measure, and weighed the Mountains in Scales, and the Hills in a Balance, to whom the Nations are as a Drop of the Bucket, and are accounted as the small Dust of the Balance? Behold, he taketh up the Isles as a very little Thing; *Lebanon* is not sufficient to burn, nor the Beasts thereof sufficient for a Burnt-offering; all Nations before him are as nothing, and they are accounted to him less than nothing, and Vanity."

"Well then, says the Soul, is this great Being, this great God, pacified towards me? Why, then I am confounded; why, then I am confounded; I cannot but remember." Why, Humiliation, you see, flows from God as the Cause, and it is the Effect. When *Isaiah* saw, as in the 6th Chapter of his Prophecy, *the Lord, high and lifted up*; he says, *I am undone: Behold, I am a Man of unclean Lips; and I dwell in the midst of a People of unclean Lips.* But when one of the Seraphims came, *Lo, this bath touched thy Lips, and thine Iniquity is taken away*; why, then he is ready to put a Blank into God's Hand, to be or do any thing that God bids him;

him; says he, *Here am I, Lord, send thou me.* My Friends, when this God appears pacified, and gives the Soul the Sense of the same; for my Part, I think it as little strange, that such is the Effect and Frame of Mind in virtue of the Lord's shewing himself thus pacified, than what it is to be thought strange, that there is true Fear and Horror when he appears otherwise. Can we wonder, that his People remember, and are confounded and shamed, when God says unto them, *I am pacified?* *Jacob*, you know, could as little bear the blessed and agreeable Account, that *Joseph* was yet alive, and Ruler over all the Land of *Egypt*, and had sent for him; as he could bear the Sight of *Joseph's* Coat of many Colours, all bloody and torn. So, let me tell you, the Sense of divine Pacification will affect the Soul more than Hell's Horrors and Damnation will. It is said, the Queen of *Sheba*, when she saw the Glory of *Solomon's* Kingdom, his House, and the Dignity of his Servants, there was no more Spirit and Life in her; but she breaks forth in an Extasy, saying, *Happy are these, &c.* So likewise the Church and People of God, when they see that the great and glorious God is pacified towards them, they remember and are confounded. Especially, in the second Place, when they see it is not only the great God who is pacified; but great Sinners, to whom he hath shewed himself pacified, such as we have an Account of in this Chapter. Here I would refer to what hath already been delivered upon this Subject.

The Soul comes to see Sin, not only in a magnifying Glass, those Sins which formerly seemed little, now appear exceeding great; but also through a multiplying Glass, what seemed to be no Sins, are now, like *Hydra's* monstrous Head, many: Hence it is, that there is such Influence upon Humiliation.—O! a View and Sense of God, in whatever Light or Appearance it is, will produce peculiar Effects upon the Soul, which the greatest of Saints can shew, yea, not only Saints, but Angels; and I may say, the Son of God himself. What other was it that had such Influence upon the Son of God himself, in the Garden, and on the Cross? was it not the Sense and Apprehension, yea, a felt Sense of his Father's Wrath, which caused the uncommon Phænomena, and preternatural Sweating of Blood? What was it that made him groan so grievously, and cry so unaccountably, as to cause the Rocks to rend, and the Dead to arise, but the Apprehension, yea, the exquisite Sense of his Father's Wrath? Again, what was it that made the Man Christ to ascend with a Shout, the Almighty with the Sound of a Trumpet, but the Sense, on the other hand, of God's being reconciled to him, and with his Elect upon his Account? Well, my Friends, doth this hold in the Case of God's dear Son, that the Sense of God's Anger, the Sense of God's Pacification, had such Influence upon Him, what then shall we say? What must the Influence of divine Pacification have upon the poor Soul, the poor Sinner, who hath

hath been groining under the Load of Sins, Guilt and Apprehension of Hell and Wrath; we say, when God comes in the Day of Power and Grace, and says to the poor, trembling Sinner, *I am pacified towards thee for all that thou hast done?* Why, the poor Soul, which was formerly trembling for Fear, is now so affected, that its Tongue falters in its Head for Joy; and frequently some incoherent Speeches are spoken at such a Season as this, like *Peter* upon the Mount, *Let us make here three Tabernacles; it is good for us to be here: But he wist not what he had said.* The Soul then is wont to wish ever to be thus, *Evermore give us of this Bread*; like those whom Christ did great Cures for in the Days of his Flesh: Such as the Man that we read of, in the 5th Chapter of *St Matthew*, who was dispossessed of the Legion; wanted much to go with Christ, when he entered into the Ship. It is said, *Ver. 18. And when he was come into the Ship, he that had been possessed of the Devil, prayed him that he might be with him. Howbeit, Jesus suffered him not; but said unto him, Go home to thy Friends, and tell them how great Things the Lord hath done, and hath had Compassion on thee. And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis, how great Things Jesus had done for him; and all Men marvelled.* Here the young Convert would have been content to have continued with Christ wherever he went, by Sea or Land; he prayed that he might be with him; he had shared so plentifully of divine Pacification,

that

that he wanted never to be without the Presence of that Person, who had appeared peculiarly unto him. However, God hath his own Ends to answer, in not suffering his People to have always his Presence here; they are to go Home, their lawful Affairs in Life are to be followed, and they are to tell what great Things God hath done for them: So this poor Person did; he *began to publish in Decapolis, how great Things Jesus had done for him.* — This was the Influence, which Christ's appearing to him in a Way of peculiar Grace, had upon him; and such is the Influence which it hath had upon others, as we were just now suggesting unto you, even Saints of the first Magnitude; and Angels themselves, though they never shared of this divine Pacification, as they did not need it, yet it hath some sort of Influence upon them. *Noah*, that Servant of God, and Preacher of Righteousness, who had so large a Sense of divine Pacification, and had one of the most signal Tokens thereof, which possibly ever was bestowed upon any of the Sons of Men; yet see, in the 8th Chapter of *Genesis*, how after the Lord had caused the Waters to assuage, and had brought all Creatures out of the Ark, what Influence this had upon this Servant of God. It is said, in the 20th and 21st Verses, *And Noah builded an Altar unto the Lord, and took of every clean Beast, and of every clean Fowl, and offered Burnt-offerings on the Altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet Savour, &c.* Here you see Reconciliation with God hath Influence upon the Spirituality

tuality of our Worship, as well as upon our Humiliation: And indeed, without the Sense of this upon our Souls in the Service of God, it is dead Devotion; yea, it is a Kind of irksome Exercise, Prayer, Praise, and Preaching of his Word, or Hearing of it. But on the Sense of divine Pacification, *Noah*, so soon as he had an Opportunity, he immediately began to build an Altar unto the Lord; and as the Lord smelt a sweet Savour in the Service, so doubtless did *Noah* likewise.— *Job* also, a Saint of the first Magnitude, according to the Account which God himself gives of him; *Hast thou*, says He, *considered my Servant Job; that there is none like him upon the Earth, a perfect and an upright Man, one that feareth God, and escheweth Evil?* Why, after God had afflicted this shining Saint, and brought him to the dark Pit of Perplexity, and *Job* had the revealed Sense of God's Pacification upon his Soul, he is greatly affected, *Chap.* xl. 6. and xlii. 3, 4. Yea, you may see in the first Chapter of this Prophecy, and three last Verses, what Influence the Appearance of God had upon the Prophets. — Thus the Consideration of the Greatness of the Person pacified, hath this peculiar Influence upon the Person to whom he is so; this is another great Reason or Cause of its Influence. We shall now in the

Third Place, Shew that the other Reason why this divine Pacification hath such Influence upon Gospel-Humiliation, is, because of the Person to whom he is pacified. It ariseth from this Consideration, the Greatness of the Sinner to whom, and

and with whom God is pacified; such were the Persons that are already mentioned in our Text. You see what they were originally, that, as to the Day of their Birth, they were cast out in the open Field, unto the loathing of their Persons, in the Day they were born, not swaddled at all, nor salted at all; just like a new-born Infant, the most ungraceful Sight that one can well handle or look upon: Such Loathsomeness was about those Persons to whom God shews himself pacified. Yea, as they are base born, so the Place of their Birth is spoken of in no better Manner, it was of the Land of *Canaan*; not *Canaan* in its reformed Condition, after the *Canaanites* were expelled and driven out of it; but *Canaan* in its idolatrous Condition; for *Canaan* was no better than other Heathen Nations around them, that were given up unto gross Idolatry. Yea, as the Place wherein they were born, originally bore no very beautiful Character, so neither their Parents from whom they were descended; *Thy Father was an Amorite, and thy Mother an Hittite*: Such indeed were our Progenitors, even those with whom God is pacified. Ye need not be proud, as some Persons are of their peculiar Parentage, for your Father was an *Amorite*, and your Mother an *Hittite*; I mean, our Father *Adam* and his Wife *Eve*, the one was a Thief, and the other a Murderer: Well, but as they cease to excuse themselves, when God lets them see himself pacified to them, then they offered Thank-offerings, and worshipped him; so do such of their Offspring, as have been made

Partakers of the same Love, and had the Manifestation of the same Pacification. You see this exemplified in *Psalm li. 12—14. Restore unto me the Joy of thy Salvation; and uphold me with thy free Spirit. Then will I teach Transgressors thy Ways, and Sinners shall be converted unto thee. Deliver me from Blood-Guiltiness, O God, thou God of my Salvation; and my Tongue shall sing aloud of thy Righteousness.* — Here you see the Influence, which the Restoration of the Joy of God's Salvation had upon the Psalmist, even in its Prospects, *I will teach Transgressors thy Ways, and Sinners shall be converted unto thee:* Again, when he was delivered from Blood-Guiltiness, then you see what the Sense of this had upon him, *My Tongue, says he, shall sing aloud of thy Righteousness;* when he considered the horrible Nature of his Sin, and the holy Nature of divine Pacification. — How does the Apostle magnify God's Mercy unto himself! says he, *I was a Blasphemer, a Persecutor, an injurious Person, but I obtained Mercy:* Hence, says he, *blest be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual Blessings, in heavenly Places in Christ.* To the same Purpose we have an Instance, *Luke vii. 38. of the Woman, who washed Christ's Feet with her Tears, and wiped them with the Hairs of her Head.* — Thus also it is the Case when the Soul sees itself to have been a great Sinner, and that the great God hath forgiven its Sin, is pacified towards it. *Peter* could not forbear weeping when the Lord looked upon him;

him; no more can any one Soul, to whom the Lord shews himself pacified.

A fourth Reason why it hath so much Influence upon Humiliation, is owing to the Nature of the Greatness of divine Pacification itself, *for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God.* You may see what *Jerusalem* had done, in a former Sermon: Well, notwithstanding this, God pardons her for all that she had done. Wherever God pardons Sin, he pardons all Sin. “ O! says the Soul, there are such and such great Sins that can never be forgiven, and I cannot see that God is pacified towards me upon that Account.” Alas, this Way of Speaking arises from a Misunderstanding of the Nature of divine Pacification: And when God gives the Sense of it, he will give the Evidence of the Pardon of all Sin; for if he is pacified towards you upon the Account of one, he is so for all, *Psalms* lviii. 2. *Thou hast forgiven the Iniquity of thy People, thou hast covered all their Sins*; not only this or that, but all their Sins, without Exception or Reservation, *thou hast covered all their Sins.* Some think the Expression is an Allusion to the Drowning of the *Egyptians*, *Psalms* cvi. 11. *And the Waters covered their Enemies*; *there was not one of them left*; no, not one of them: The Stroke was so close upon them, saith he, *thou hast covered all their Sins*, as the Sea did the *Egyptians*; not one of them is left, not one, but all. *Psalms* ciii. 3. *Who forgiveth all thine Iniquities*; *who healeth all thy Diseases.* For the Blood of Jesus Christ, thy Son, cleanse

from all Sin ; not one, but all. When God shews himself pacified to the poor Sinner, he does it roundly ; he forgives all its Iniquities, and healeth all its Diseases ; for the Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all Sin : All our Sins, original and actual, of Omission and of Commission, against the Law, and against the Gospel, against Nature, and against Reason, all are done away ; *I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done.*—Why, my Brethren, if it was not so, that when God pardons and is pacified, if it was not for all that we have done, we should be undone ; we should be lost, notwithstanding of all, cursed and damned, if it was not for all that we have done. For suppose you are a Sinner, and know yourself to be guilty of ten thousand Sins, and if God should pardon all these ten thousand ; and yet there was but one of the least of them, which he did not shew himself to you to be pacified upon the Account of that one Sin, though never so small, would undo you for ever : If any one Sin was to stand upon Record against us, it would be our Ruin. “ But, O ! says the Soul, is it for all that I have done ? and add to this, have I the Subscription of God to attest the Truth of it, *saieth the Lord God ?* ” There was a *Need be* for the Lord to set his Name to this Account we have, for indeed if he had not said it, I know not who could have believed it ; hence it is confirmed by the Oath of him who cannot lie. — Well, my Friends, these are a few of the Reasons why the Sense of divine Pacification hath such Influence upon

upon Gospel-Humiliation. We now come to the last Head, which was to make some Improvement.

(1.) Then, this Doctrine shews us the Error of such as would make Conditions, Qualifications, and Motives in the Creature, the Cause of God's being pacified. To which of the Saints shall such turn themselves? O! poor Sinner, is this the Thought in your Breast, that you must be so and so humbled, you must have such and such a Sense of Impotency, such a Degree of the Work of the Law, otherwise you cannot expect that God will be pacified unto you? Poor Creatures! I pity your Case, if it is thus; and I doubt not but it hath been the Case with many of the dear Children of Christ. I would have you observe your Mistake, from this Doctrine, That all your Humiliation, if it do not flow from the Sense of divine Pacification, it is of the same Nature with that Sorrow which the Damned in Hell have; there is nothing in it sweet, or acceptable unto the Lord, no more than what there is in theirs: It is only like the Howling of a Dog, or the Braying of an Ass, when that which flows from, and is the Fruit of divine Pacification, is like the Crying of a Child; Surely, I have heard *Ephraim* bemoaning himself thus: Or the Bleating of a Lamb, when it misses its Mother; the Mother cries, and the Lamb cries at the Voice of the Mother. So is it when this Humiliation flows from divine Pacification.

(2.) Hence this Doctrine reproves those Preachers, who preach Humiliation, Repentance, and such like Points, in a preposterous Way. Who are they that do this? Why, such as invert the Gospel-Order and Gospel-Doctrine most egregiously and dangerously; for though this divine Pacification is the Ground of all true Humiliation, yet this Humiliation is urged as the Reason, Cause, or Ground of divine Pacification. Why, this is no other than a putting the Plough before the Ox; and, instead of making Christ the *Alpha* and *Omega*, the Beginning and the End of all Gospel-Doctrine; the Creature is introduced, as First and Last in this Matter. — Hence, my Friends, I have observed in reading some Books, wherein there are indeed many excellent Morals expressed, such as *The Whole Duty of Man*, and *The Practice of Piety*, and a great many more which I could name: We say, though there are excellent Morals laid down, yet it is in a most preposterous Way, not according to the Gospel-Order; inasmuch as Man is dealt with, in many of these, as if he was not a fallen Creature, a dead and undone Sinner: A Task is indeed put into his Hand, but there is no Straw to make the Brick with; Humiliation is insisted upon most absurdly, while it is made the Reason or Cause of Acceptance. But most scripturally, you see, when it is made the Effect or Fruit which flows from Pacification. — This, my Friends, is the Amount of much Doctrine, that Humiliation hath Influence upon divine Pacification.

cation. But, I hope, you have been taught otherwise, and have in some Degree learned, from what hath been treated upon in this Text, that, instead of this being true, that Humiliation hath Influence upon Pacification; that such is the Influence which the Sense of divine Pacification hath upon Gospel-Humiliation, that it makes the Soul *remember, and be confounded, and never open their Mouth any more, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God.*

(3.) Hence, poor Sinner, whose Sins are great, let me conclude this Text with dropping a Word unto you. May be some are here, who know they are great Sinners, but yet still they love their Sins; and they think, such is the Nature of divine Pacification, that they may live in them. I answer, In short I am sorry to observe, that that same Fire which kills and consumes the Corruptions of God's Children, you take Sparks from it to kindle and inflame yours: Let me, in short, tell such, that these are Marks of the blackest Kind, which many Reprobates have bore before you; yet such is the Nature of our Sin, that it turns Water into Fire; when as the Water of Pacification makes a Flood of Humiliation in others to flow. — But again, I want not to live in my Sin, it is my daily Grief; but I am afraid, God will not or cannot be pacified towards me. Answer; What is your Sin? Is it like *Manasseh's, Abraham's Idolatry, Solomon's, Noah's, Lot's, David's, Peter's*? But if the Lord is exercising you
thus,

thus, let me tell you, I apprehend this flows from divine Pacification, though you have not yet attained the Sense of it : But I say unto you, as our Lord did, *If thou believest, thou shalt see the Salvation* ; by and by you shall have a Sense of it. And therefore, poor Soul, we who are Ministers, ought to speak comfortably to you : *Comfort ye, comfort ye my People, saith your God ; speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her Warfare is accomplished, that her Iniquity is pardoned ; for she hath received of the Lord's Hand double for all her Sins.*



S E R M O N

S E R M O N IX.

The Marvels of the Month ABIB.

EXOD. xii. 2. and DEUT. xvi. 1.

This Month shall be unto you the Beginning of Months; it shall be the first Month of the Year to you. Observe the Month of Abib, and keep the Passover unto the Lord thy God; for in the Month of Abib the Lord thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by Night.

MY Friends, Though several of the Jewish Rites in point of Observation are now dead, and others substituted in the Place of them; as for Instance, that of the Passover, in Room of which there is the Lord's Supper: But though the People and the Period of their Observances have expired and died; yet, I dare say, the spiritual Meaning of these Things will never die, but be minded in Life by all the true *Israel* of God. If there was among God's ancient *Israel* the memorable Month, the remarkable Year, which was *the Beginning of Months, the first Month of the Year*

Year unto them; the grand Year and Epocha of Time, from whence they commenced their religious Kalendar, viz. the Month *Abib*, because in that Month they had met with a remarkable Deliverance out of the Land of *Egypt*: Sure I am, there is a Month and a Year in the Christian's Kalendar, no less remarkable than *Israel's Abib*, which hath been to them the Beginning of Months, and the first Month of the Year, viz. the observable Christian *Abib*, in which the Lord their God brought them out of the Land of *Egypt* by Night. These Words respect the Observation of a religious Statute, namely, the Passover. I would observe to you, in order to clear any thing not obvious here, that before the Deliverance of *Israel* out of *Egypt*, they began their Year in the Month *Tisri*, answerable to our *September*; after their coming out of *Egypt*, they began it in the Month *Nisan*, which is here called the Month *Abib*, and signifies a *Year of Corn*, because in this Month the Barley in the Land of *Egypt* began to be ear'd; it is answerable to the Parts of our *March* and *April*. But, passing these Things, what is said in the Text of *Israel's* coming out of *Egypt*, is typical of the spiritual Deliverance of God's *Israel*; and in it observe these Particulars.

(1.) What Account God's *Israel* were to make of the Time of their Deliverance, *This Month shall be unto you the Beginning of Months*, and *shall be the first Month of the Year*; to account of it, as if they had hardly had a Month or Year before it: It was to be like the Beginning of Time and Days.

And

And indeed when the Month of Conversion commenceth, the Soul is ready to reckon all the Time it had before as no Time, or as lost Time: It dates the Beginning of its Time, of its Days, and of its spiritual Life, from this Month; it is to the Soul the Beginning of Months, and the first Month of the Year.

(2.) We have the Statute, enjoining the *Israelites* to observe this Month, *Observe the Month Abib, and keep the Passover unto the Lord thy God.* Many observable Things were there in this Month, such as the slaying of the Lamb; with the Blood of which the Door-Posts of the Children of *Israel* were sprinkled, so that the destroying Angel passed over: Hence it is called a *Passover*, because the Angel passed or leaped over those Houses where the Blood was sprinkled, and slew the First-born in all the rest throughout the Land of *Egypt*. But more of this in the Sequel.

(3.) We have the Reason why *Israel* was to observe this Month *Abib*, *because the Lord thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by Night.* O! it was a deadly Night, and yet a desirable Night; a deadly Night to the *Egyptians*, for there was one general Funeral that Night over all the Land: But a desirable Night to *Israel*, for they had the grievous Yoke taken off their Necks; and they set out this Night in full March into the promised Land, their own Country, conducted by the Men of God, *Moses* and *Aaron*, who were conducted by God himself. *This therefore shall be the Beginning of Months, and the first Month of the Year.*

Observe

Observe the Month Abib, keep the Passover; for in this Month thou camest out of the Land of Egypt by Night. Now these Words teach this Doctrine, That the Season of the Soul's Deliverance from spiritual Bondage, is like the Beginning of Months, the first Month of the Year; observable as Abib, in which God brought Israel out of the Land of Egypt by Night.

In discoursing of this Text and Doctrine, we would prosecute the following Method.

- I. Shew how this Month may be the Beginning of Months.
- II. What Kind of a Year that is, which it is the first Month of.
- III. What are the observable Things which obtain in this Month and Year.
- IV. Reasons would be relevantly rendered, why the Month *Abib* is to be observed.
- V. Inferences deduced for the Application of the Whole.

I. Then, how may this Month of *Abib*, being the Month of the Soul's Deliverance from spiritual Bondage, be said to be the Beginning of Months? It is so, inasmuch as in this Month there was the first Motion and Beginning of spiritual Life; it was in this Month that the Babe of Grace was first found to move: Before this Month, there

was

was nothing but Death, dead was the Elect themselves in Trespases and Sins; under a twofold Death first. They were dead in point of Law, inasmuch as the Sentence of the Law struck at them, as well as others; *the Soul that sins, it shall die*: And inasmuch as they had sinned in *Adam*, they surely fell with him, as dead Men into the Grave; *in the Day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die*. The Sentence was pronounced against them, as much as against a Malefactor at the Bar, only the Execution thereof was suspended. The Law of God said concerning them, as *Pharaoh* did concerning every Man-Child that was born of a *Hebrew Woman*, *ye shall kill him*.

Secondly, They were dead before this Month, not only in point of Law, but also in point of Action; they were intirely destitute of the least Spark of spiritual Life God-ward. For they are not only represented as being without Strength; thus a Man may in some measure be, and at the same time have Remainder of Life in him: But here Life had abandoned the Soul with respect to God; there could not be one Act, not so much as one faint Breathing, not so much as a Lifting up of the Eye-Lids unto the Lord; no spiritual Sense, not so much as a Motion of the smallest Member, the Movement of a Finger: Hence God's Elect, as well as others, are said to be dead; *This my Son was dead, and is alive*. A Thing cannot well be said to be dead, which hath any Remains of Life in it: And if Man, as some imagine, hath some Remains of Life in him, we cannot say that
he

he is dead. But sure, whatever many imagine concerning this, we are expressly told, that *Sinners are dead; the Time comes wherein the Dead shall bear*: They are as dead as a Corps which hath been laid in the Grave till consumed. — There is indeed a threefold Death, natural, spiritual, and eternal: There is a spiritual, which consists in the total Want of spiritual Principles; and there is an eternal Death, which consists in the Separation of Soul and Body from God to all Eternity; *the Wages of Sin is Death*. — Well, then we say the Soul's begun Deliverance from the State of Death, and having the first Motions of spiritual Life given unto it, may be said to be the Beginning of Months, the first Month of the Year, an observable *Abib*. In this Month there is Life and Motion, which there never was before. Wherever there is Life, there is Motion: So here the Soul, in this Month *Abib*, receives Motion, such as it never had before. For there are certain Duties, which it never moved in in such Sort before; for Instance, Prayer. Behold, he prays, who never prayed to Purpose before. The Man moves in the Duty of Hearing, Reading, Examination, and Self-Mortification, in the Manner he never did before. That Word the Man heard for Months and Years before, with a natural Ear, as an idle Tale, or possibly as a lovely Song; yea, that Text which he had heard preached from, read and repeated an hundred Times before, unmoved, he now hears it, so as to make his Ears to tingle; it is like loud Thunder in a Man's Ears: It is now

no longer the Word of Man, but evidences itself to be the Word of God; *quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged Sword, dividing asunder between Joints and Marrow, and is a Discerner of the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart.* This, therefore, is the Month *Abib*; the Beginning of Months, and the first Month of the Year. — Again, there are some Graces also which move in this Month that never moved before, which makes it the Beginning of Months: Faith begins to move thus, “ Lord, I believe, help thou my Unbelief!” Christ says to the Soul in this Month, as he did to *Martha*, *Said I not unto thee, if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldest see the Glory of God?* And hence the Soul answers, “ I believe if thou hadst been here, my Brother had not died.” Hope, which never moved before, begins now to move in the Manner it never did, because the Soul is begotten again unto a lively Hope; Christ is now in his People, the Hope of Glory. Yea, Love begins to move in Symptoms and Grones for Want of Love, and is discernible by some little Offices, loving Offices, which they do to Christ or his Children: And now in this Month they move; and what they move from is Sin, Satan, Self, and Self-Righteousness; and the Objects which they move to, are God, Christ, Holiness, Heaven, and the Righteousness of Christ. So far as this divine Life takes Place, there is an universal Motion over the whole Man; all the Faculties of the Soul move God-ward; the Understanding to discern him, the Will to bow to him, and the

Affections to embrace him : All the Members of the Body ; the Eyes are lifted up in Prayer to him, the Ear is open to receive Instruction, the Mouth enlarged to sing his Praises, the Tongue will no longer be the Trumpeter of evil Communication, the Hand and Heart will be the Instruments of Devotion, the Knee will be bowed unto the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Feet will delight to carry a Man to the House of the Lord ; all is in Motion for God, so far as this Life takes Place. Now all this is real in this Month, and not aerial, as much real as ever it was in the Month of Man's natural Birth and Life. This is not a bare Picture of a Man that you see, having Eyes, Ears, Mouth, Nose, Hands and Feet ; yet we know it hath no Life, because it hath no Motion : So if we see a Professor without Practice, we see no more than a Piece of Paint ; he is a Statue, and not a Saint ; he is a Stock, and not a moving Christian, no more than the Image of a Christian. It is true indeed, that a Hypocrite may have the external Motion of a Christian ; but such Christians, they are like *Bartholomew* Puppet-Shews, who by some means or other are made to move up and down, and dance about ; yet all are dead, without a Principle of Life inherent in them : But it is not so with those who move in the Month *Abib*. — Again it is so, because in this Month the Symptoms of Life appear in God's *Israel's* breathing ; if a Person ceases to breathe, he surely ceases to live, or seemingly ceases to live well. In this Month the Child of God begins to breathe in such

Sort

Sort as he never did before ; and therefore it is the Beginning of Months unto him, and the first Month of the Year : In virtue of God's breathing into his Soul the Breath of Life, he becomes a living, breathing Soul ; and the Holy Ghost breathes in him, from him, and upon him. O ! Breath of God, come from the four Winds, and breathe upon these slain ! *Awake, O North-Wind, and come, thou South-Wind, and blow upon my Garden, that the Spices thereof may flow forth.* This is nothing else than the Holy Ghost breathing in and upon the Man. The Holy Ghost is to a Believer, like as Breath is to a Man's Body, without which he could not live : Or he is like the Soul unto the Body ; take away the Soul from the Body, and it would soon begin to stink ; and take the Holy Spirit away, what would the Saint be ? That Soul which knew nothing of these vital Breathing before, knows now something of the Sense of that which the Psalmist speaks, *As the Hart panteth after the Water-Brooks, so panteth my Soul after thee, O God.* — The earthly Man, you know how he breathes after the Earth ; he will be up in the Morning by Break of Day, sit late, and toil himself all Day, breathing after the World.—Well, I can tell you, that in this Month *Abib*, there is a spiritual Breathing after God, and after heavenly Things : An earthly Man, he hath a very bad Breath ; it smells of the Earth, it smells of Hell ; yea, there are such Multitudes of bad Breaths by People passing the Streets, that the Child of God is ready to be suffocated or

knocked down. Some are breathing out Blasphemy, fancying themselves to be the bravest Fellows that can belch out the most abominable Oaths: Some are breathing out Cruelty; some, Lust; some, Vanity; some, one Abomination; and some, another. This shews indeed that these are living Creatures; but then they have not entered upon this Beginning of Months, namely, in breathing after God. The Breath of the Soul in this Month is sweet like an Infant's; it smells of Heaven, of Christ, and of God: Hence it is the Beginning of Months, for formerly it did not breathe in this Manner.—But then it is the Beginning of Months, inasmuch as in this Month *Abib* the People of God receive another Symptom of Life, and that is Growth; when we see a Thing grow, we may be sure there is some Life. In this Month the Soul then begins to grow; it begins to grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of Christ; it begins to grow the very contrary Way to what it was wont to grow. No sooner is this Life in this Month begun, than the Soul begins to grow in one Way or another; if he grows not upward in one Grace, he grows downward in another; if he grows not sensibly in outward Fruitfulness, yet he grows insensibly in inward Sorrow, because of his Unfruitfulness. — But then, again it may be said to be the Beginning of Months, inasmuch as he begins to feel, which is another Symptom of Life, in another Manner than ever he did. He begins to feel something in him craving like a new-born Infant after the Breast, after the sincere Milk

Milk of the Word, that he may grow thereby. That which was formerly tasteless, as the White of an Egg to him, is now begun to be sweet as the Hony and the Hony-Comb: He begins to have a Relish for the Word, and can say, *Tby Word was found of me, and I did eat it, and it was to me the Joy and Rejoicing of my Heart.* The Man finds in this Month, when he comes out of *Egypt*, that it is not by Bread alone that he lives; once though he could live very well, if he had Bread, that is, Abundance of natural Things; but now it is the Beginning of Months with him, and he cannot live without the Bread, without the Word of the Lord, what proceeds out of his Mouth. Yea, in this Month the Soul begins to feel what hurts it; namely, Sin and Corruption, those Sins which seemed not to pain it, but please it formerly: O! how do they pain it now? O! how restless do they make it, and to cry out upon the Account of them?

Secondly, Inasmuch as in this Month was the Beginning of Light, Light was among one of the first Things which God made when he made the World, *Gen. i. 1—3. In the Beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth. And the Earth was without Form and void, and Darknefs was upon the Face of the Deep; and the Spirit of God moved upon the Face of the Waters. And God said, Let there be Light; and there was Light.* As this was in the Beginning of Time and Months, so it is in this Month that Light hath its Beginning upon the Soul. There was a Darknefs in the Land of

Egypt, it was over all the Land, yea, a Darkneſs which could be felt. So alſo is it the Caſe with reſpect to thoſe which are brought from ſpiritual Bondage; there is a Darkneſs all over their Souls; the Soul is like to thoſe Parts of the Globe, where the Sun doth not ſhine for ſeveral Months: But, upon its firſt Appearance, all the Inhabitants are ſo pleaſed and rejoiced, that they aſcend high Hills and Places of Eminence, in order to worſhip; its ariſing is like the Beginning of Days and Months to them. In like manner is it the Caſe in this Month, when the Sun of Righteouſneſs firſt ariſeth upon the Soul; then theſe Words of the Prophet *Iſaiah*, Chap. lx. 1. *Arise, ſhine, for thy Light is come, and the Glory of the Lord is riſen upon thee*, are ſweet: Then do they ſalute the riſing Sun, like thoſe Perſons whoſe Situation in the World gives them at leaſt no leſs than five or ſix Months of Darkneſs in the Year. O! this indeed may be ſaid to be the Beginning of Months unto them; and ſo it is to the poor Soul, when Light firſt begins to ſhine upon it. In this Month the Soul begins to ſee, in the Lord's Light, God himſelf; it begins to ſee itſelf; and begins to ſee its Way to God, the Word, and the Works of his Hands, with a Light which it never ſaw them in before. (1ſt.) It begins to ſee God. The Soul had heard of God before; but it was only with the Ear of the deaf Perſon, it was in the dark; hence it cannot ſay, as *Job* did, after he ſaw God in the great and glorious Manner he was pleaſed to manifeſt himſelf, *I have heard of thee by the Hearing of the Ear*;

Ear; but now mine Eye seeth thee: Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in Dust and Ashes. When the poor Soul first sees God in his own Light, he is somewhat like to what we find is written concerning the Queen of *Sheba*, who came to see *Solomon* from the uttermost Parts of the Earth; when she saw him in his Glory, she was so astonished with the Sight, that in an Extasy she expresses herself thus; *It was a true Report that I heard of thee in my own Country; behold, the one half was not told me:* And there was no more Spirit left in her, she was ready to die away with Wonder and Surprise.—Well, indeed this is but a faint Emblem of what is the Frame of the Soul, when it begins to see God. First, I think, it is somewhat like that which *Manoah* and his Wife were in, when they saw the Angel of the Lord did so wonderously with the Flame, which went up from the Altar to Heaven; they fell upon their Faces to the Ground; Humility and Admiration fill all the Powers of their Souls and all their Senses. Or, I think, this Sight partakes somewhat of the Nature of that which *Mary* had upon the first Day of the Week, when she saw her Lord after his rising again, *and he said unto her, Mary!* she was ready to melt with Emotion of Soul, so that he made calm her Passions; *Touch me not, I am not yet ascended.* — Sometimes this Sight of the Lord hath something of Terror, and is somewhat like that of the Disciples, when he appeared unto them after his Resurrection, and stood in the midst of them; they were terrified and afraid,

and supposed that they had seen a Spirit. Then the Soul in this Beginning of Months, in which Light arises by which it first begins to see the Lord, I think, is somewhat like *Saul*; when suddenly there shone round about him a Light from Heaven; why he, it is said, trembling and astonished, cried, *What wilt thou have me to do?* Or, to give further Scope to Thought upon this Matter, we conceive the Soul is somewhat like *Simeon*, when he first cast his Eyes upon the Lord Christ in the Temple; *Lord*, says he, *now lettest thou thy Servant depart in Peace, according to thy Word; for mine Eyes have seen thy Salvation*: The poor Soul sees then in such a manner, that it does not matter though it was never to see Man or Woman more. Can we conceive what Countenance a Child of God will have when he first sees, and is sure of himself being in Heaven, sitting at the Side of his God? I think, as godly *Gray* expresses it, without inroaching upon the Mysteries of Heaven, there are these Questions which the Christian will propose when he comes first there. The first Question may be this: Is it I? is it I? cursed I? that hath lain among the Pots, whose Wings are now covered with Silver, and whose Feathers with yellow Gold? O! Christians, the Day is coming wherein you will almost mistake yourselves; you will have such a Sight of God, and the ineffable Glories of Heaven, that you will be apt when you see yourselves to say, What is this poor Mortal I? am I become immortal? Is it this poor, sinful I, that is become sinless? The second Question we may suppose

pose will be this: Is it He? is it He? Is it that exalted He? the first Sight of Christ will make the Saint say, Is it He, whom I saw such a Sabbath, in such a Sermon? Is it He that I saw in such a Prayer? O! what will be the Thought, when the Saint gets first that beloved One in his Arms, and is made to cry out, "Now I am rich, now I am full, now I am eternally made up."—Well, when the Soul first begins to see God, coming forth out of spiritual Bondage, it is as it were all Amazement: And if there is any Intercourse at any Time between Earth and Heaven, I think it is at the Time when the Soul, coming forth out of *Egypt*, gets the Discovery of God in such sort as he never did before; yea, and it may be in such a Manner as he shall never do after, until the Day of his coming to the Gates of Heaven; when Christ will open the Door, and, with a Smile, say, Welcome, Friend, come in. Thus it may be said to be the Beginning of Months, inasmuch as in it the Soul begins to see God by that Light, that native Light, which arises and springs from God himself, which indeed is the only true Light that the Soul can see him in; as the Light of the Sun, it is impossible to see it in any other Light than that which ariseth from itself; how vain would it be to set up a Candle or a Lamp to look at the Sun? So indeed all the natural Light which a Man hath, all the acquired Light he has attained, will not let him see God with equal Advantage; He, like the Sun, can only properly be seen in his own Light; and in that purest Light of his, they shall clearly see

see Light. — Now in virtue of this Light, the Soul sees God in the Beginning of this Month as a God of Love: God is Love; he that dwells in God, dwells in Love, not only as the Creator: This is a poor, comfortless Sight of him; no Doubt something in that may please the Mind. *Adam* in Innocence enjoyed much of God in this Light, he saw much of him; but when he saw him at the Cool of Day coming to him, and as the Woman's Seed, as his Saviour, as a God of Love, the like of this Light he never saw in all the Lustre of the Creation: This was indeed the Beginning of Months to him, when he saw him in Character of a God of Love and Mercy. So the poor Prodigal did, when his Father saw him yet a great Way off, he ran unto him, and met him, and fell upon his Neck, and kissed him: The poor Prodigal had formerly received many Favours from his Father; but he seems never to have seen them till that Season, then he acknowledges that he was not worthy to be called his Son.—Then the Soul, as *Israel* did in that Night, in that Beginning of Months, wherein they came out of the Land of *Egypt*, sees the Love and Mercy of God in preserving them, while he hath destroyed ten thousand around. So the poor Soul, immerging out of spiritual Bondage, sees a little of the Freedom of God's Love; *I will heal their Backsliding, I will love them freely.* It sees that it is free in its first Fountain; I mean, as it lay in the Heart of God. It sees that there was no Cause in the Creature why he sets his Love upon any of *Adam's*

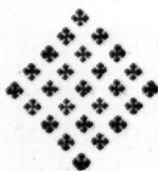
Adam's Posterity: But it sees that the Cause of it was eternally in God himself; he chose them, he predestinated them, because it was his sovereign Will so to do. *Ephes. i. 5. Having predestinated us unto the Adoption of Children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good Pleasure of his Will. Who hath saved them, and called them with an holy Calling, not according to their Works, but according to his own Purpose and Grace, which was given them in Christ Jesus, before the World began,* 2 Tim. i. 9.—The Soul sees, that as this Love is sovereign and free in the Fountain of it, viz. the Heart of God; it likewise sees, that it is sovereign and free in the Egress and Flow of it, to this Part of the World, and not to another; or that there was nothing in the World inducing God to make the Revelation of this Love, and the manifesting of it in this World. Yea, the enlightened Soul sees that it is free in regard of the Application of it to poor elect Sinners, without any Respect to good Works, or Qualifications whatever in them. That which creates Love among the Creatures, is some one Consideration or other, partly of Beauty; perhaps of Riches, of Strength, or Wisdom, or the like: But the gracious Soul sees that there was no such Thing in or about it to attract his Love; for *when thou wast in thy Blood*, then he looked upon thee, and said unto thee, *Live*; and *thy Time was a Time of Love*. Instead of Beauty, there was nothing but Deformity; instead of Strength, there was nothing but Weakness; instead of Riches, there was nothing

nothing but Poverty. O! how sovereign is this Love, in Opposition to Merit, and in Opposition to Constraint! The Thing which we call *Love*, could not be Love if it was forced or constrained, it is of a voluntary Nature; much more so does the Soul see the Love of God to be.— Again, the Soul, in this Month of its being delivered out of spiritual Bondage, begins to see something of the strong and invincible Nature of the Love of God; that it is Love, which many Waters could not quench, nor the Floods drown it; it is strong Love, it is strong as Death, that all the Creatures in Nature could never overcome. There was both stormy Seas and high Mountains in the Way of this Love; but behold, he came skipping over the Hills, and leaping upon the Mountains; behold, the Floods could not drown it, it runs through every Difficulty, and encounters every Impediment. The infinite Distance between God and the Creature, was a Mountain in the Way of this Love, but behold, he overcomes it; for, *great is the Mystery of Godliness*, God manifest in the Flesh. A moral Distance between God and the Creature was another Mountain in the Way of this Love, but behold, he overcomes this; for behold, he was not only manifest in the Flesh, but he was made according to the Likeness of sinful Flesh; and, for Sin, he condemned Sin in the Flesh; yea, *He who knew no Sin, was made Sin for us, that we might become the Righteousness of God in him*. The Curse of the Law was another Mountain in the Way, but behold, he overcomes this

this Mountain likewise; for *He bath redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us.* Again, Sin in its Guilt, Power and Pollution, was another Mountain in the Way of his Love, but behold, he leaps over this; for *He bath finished Transgression, and made an End of Sin.* Ignominy, Suffering and Sorrow, was another seen Mountain in the Way, but behold, he leaps over this Mountain; for he was content, to endure the Cross, and to despise the Shame; he is content to become a Man of Sorrow, and acquainted with Griefs. — Again, when this Love comes to the Soul in the Beginning of Months, it finds it in a very bad Condition, dead perhaps; twenty, thirty, forty, fifty or sixty Years, lying in the Grave of Sin, so that behold it stinketh! O! what an Object is the Sinner? an Object more of Loathing, than of Loving: But yet the God of Love conquers this likewise; Floods cannot drown it here. O! thus the Soul, immerging out of spiritual *Egypt* in the Beginning of this Month, sees the Love of God, a God of Love, as that he acknowledges his Love is invincible. Yea, in a Word, the Soul sees through that Light which then shines about God and in the Soul, that it is incomparable Love to guilty Men: For God loves those whom he brought out of *Egypt*, more than he does all the World, all the Men in the World, *Isa. xliii. 3, 4. I will give Men for thee, and People for thy Life.* Yea, he loves Believers more than he loves Angels: Angels are his Servants, the Saints are his Sons; Angels are his Subjects, Saints
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are his Spouse. — Again, he loves them more than he does the World, and all Things in it. The World consists of Heaven and Earth. As for the Earth, he did not value that; for when the Devil proposed that he would make a Present of it to him, the Kingdoms of this World, and all the Glory of them, he contemned them all for the Love which he bore to his People. Though we may suppose that he liked Heaven well; yet not so well, as not to be willing to leave it for the Love which he bore to his People, to dwell with Men upon Earth. — I shall only add, that this Love is such, that he seems, if I may so speak, to love his People better than he did himself: He loved their Lives and Safety more than he did his own, for he laid down his Life for his Friends; he prayed more for them than he prayed for himself, *John xvii.* Yea, this Love was such as induced him to part with those Things which are reckoned most valuable among Men: As, 1st, Men make great Account of their good Name; but his Love made him willing to overcome the Reproach of the People: Men make great Account of their Riches; but though he was rich, yet for our Sakes he became poor: Men make great Account of their Lives; *Skin for Skin, all that a Man hath will he give for his Life*; but Christ parts with his Life; *Who gave himself for me, who loved me.* Men do, or at least they ought to account much of their Souls; yet out of Love to us, he made his Soul an Offering for Sin; *My Soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto Death.* Men, I mean holy Men,
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make greater Account of the Love of God than of their Lives; *Thy Loving-kindness, says David, is better than Life*; yet Christ, such was his Love to his *Israel*, that he was content to lose the Sense of that for a while, and to have God the Father frown and forsake him, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* — Well now, my Brethren, is there such a Light which ariseth in the Beginning of this Month, as makes these Discoveries that I have been speaking of to you? You see then how justly the Soul delivered from spiritual Bondage, is in such a State as may be called the Beginning of Months, and the first Month of the Year; the observable *Abib*, wherein the Lord delivered his People out of the Land of *Egypt* by Night.



S E R M O N X.

The Marvels of the Month ABIB.

EXOD. xii. 2. *and* DEUT. xvi. 1.

This Month shall be unto you the Beginning of Months; it shall be the first Month of the Year to you. Observe the Month of Abib, and keep the Passover unto the Lord thy God; for in the Month of Abib the Lord thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by Night.

WE proceed to shew,
Thirdly, How the Season of the Soul's Deliverance from spiritual Bondage, may be said to be the Beginning of Months. It may be thus: Inasmuch as in this Month the Soul begins to love God; in all the preceding Months the Soul hated God, and Things which were godly. But in the Beginning of this Month, Hatred is turned into Love; the Soul is subdued; the Soul is stolen away to Christ. The Soul, I may say, is like a young Babe, or a young Bride: In this Month the young Babe seems to have its Life wrapped up
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in the Care, Caresses, and in the Breast of its Mother and Nurse, cannot bear, without crying, the Denial of its Nourishment from a Mother or Nurse; or, as a young Bride seems to have all her Soul, all her Joy, where there is pure conjugal Love, wrapped up in the Person and Life of her Husband. Just so, in the Beginning of Months, is it with the Soul; it is filled with such Love, that it can no more bear the Absence of Christ, than the new-born Babe can bear the Want of the Breast, or the Bride can bear that the Bridegroom should be taken from her. When *Naomi* was about to leave her Daughters, *Ruth* and *Orpah*, she says unto them, *Turn again, my Daughters*: How cutting was it! they lifted up their Voices and wept, and were loth to leave their dear Mother; yea, *Ruth* says, *Intreat me not to leave thee*, &c. So I think, if I know any thing about this Month, it is thus with the Soul; after Love is fixed upon the Beloved, the Thoughts of Parting are very pinching to it: However, this is an Ingredient of our first, of our nearest and dearest Enjoyment of God here, which we will not have in Heaven, where we shall be under no Apprehension of being parted from the Presence of divine *Immanuel*.—But, I say, this is the Beginning of Months; inasmuch as the Soul begins to love God, in this first Month of the Year, with a Virgin-like Love, as it is said in *Cant. iv. Because of the Savour of thy good Ointments, thy Name is as Ointment poured forth, therefore the Virgins love thee*. It is the Love of their Virginity. He who is white and

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ruddy,

ruddy, the Chief among ten Thousand, He that is fairer than the Children of Men, hath appeared to Heaven-born Souls; and he hath powerfully drawn away their Hearts after him, as never nothing in the World before could do it. Yea, nothing in the World now can prevent their loving him: They count not their Lives dear unto the Death for his Sake in this first Month of the Year, wherein they find that God loves them with an everlasting Love. I must say it, that the Soul loves God above what it does itself at this Time: And I think, if ever there was a Time wherein the Soul could speak, as some of the Martyrs did, when dying for Christ thus, It is now if every Drop of Blood in their Bodies was a Man, and every Hair of their Heads; yea, if they had ten thousand Lives, they would give all, and think them far too little for Christ. O! *Israel* of God, have you known this Month? I trust then you have known something of what I am now speaking of: How were you when God first locked you up in his Arms, and said unto you, *I am thy God*? Why, I think then your very Hearts were in God, gone out of the World, gone out of the Creature, and gone out of yourselves; saying, as God says of you, *Here I will stay, for I do like it*: Well, so says the Soul. This Beginning of Months, and the first Month of the Year, is such an observable one, that I find God mentions it with Pleasure, *Jer. ii. 2. I remember thee*, says he, *the Kindness of thy Youth, and the Love of thine Espousals*, &c. Yea, again, this Month, because it is the Beginning of Months,
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and the first Month of the Year, God says of it, *Thy Time was a Time of Love*; a Time of Love indeed, when there were the strongest Tokens of Love, even on your Side, towards the Beloved. What were these? Why, *thou wentest after me in the Wilderness, in a Land not inhabited*, bore the greatest Contumely, the greatest Reproach, the greatest Crosses, the greatest Afflictions, the greatest Temptations: *Thou wentest after me* in this Month. If ever the Soul knew, methinks, what it was to have the Spirit of that Scripture, *Whosoever loves Father and Mother, Wife or Children, better than me, is not worthy of me*, it is now; though they are all dear unto the Soul. O! how much dearer is its God and its Saviour to it? What Things it formerly accounted Gain, it now accounts Loss, for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Jesus Christ its Lord, (with the Apostle) *for whom I have suffered the Loss of all Things*.

Fourthly, The Season of the Soul's Deliverance from spiritual Bondage, may be said to be the Beginning of Months, and the first Month of the Year; inasmuch as the Soul begins in this Month to be in its right Mind, according to what is said in *Mark v*. The Man who was possessed of a Legion, we see what kind of a Man he was before Christ cured him; why, a Madman! cutting himself with Stones, and not liking to live as a Man, but in Mountains and among Tombs: Howbeit, in the Beginning of this Month, we meet with him sitting, which he seldom did before; he is brought to Rest, for he that be-

lieveth immediately enters into Rest; yea, he is clothed, and in his right Mind. The Man which was without Raiment, and not ashamed of his Nakedness, is now clothed, and in his right Mind: In all the former Months of his Life, he was in a wrong Mind, a very Madman; his Words, his Works, and his Thoughts, were all Symptoms of his Madness; but now in his right Mind, like the Prodigal, of whom it is said, that *when he came to himself*, shewing that formerly he was like a Man out of his Senses, beside himself, a Lunatic: But in this Beginning of Months he begins to come to himself. Indeed every natural Man is a sort of a Lunatic, as Christ speaks of his Crucifiers, *they know not what they do*; as we say of Madmen, they know not what they do. The Misery of mad Men are in our Eyes, as the Misery of wicked Men are in God's, who looks upon them as beside themselves, distracted Men. *David* did but feign himself mad; but wicked Men, according to Scripture-Account, are really mad; hence the Psalmist speaks of some being mad against him: And thus *Paul* acknowledges, that, before the Beginning of this Month, he was mad in persecuting the Saints. Thus *Balaam* was so mad, that he was more irrational than the very Ass he rode upon, for it reproved the Madness of the Prophet. Hence it is, that natural Men are compared to Bulls, to Wolves, to Dogs, to Foxes, and to Swine, to these irrational Creatures; *many Bulls, even the strong Bulls of Bashan, have compassed me about*: And again, our Lord, when he

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is sending his Disciples forth, *Behold*, says he, *I send you forth as Sheep among Wolves*; to the Foxes, *Go, tell that Fox*, &c. and to Dogs and Swine, *Cast not Pearls before Swine, neither give you that which is holy unto Dogs, lest they turn again and rent you*. Yea, the natural Man is more irrational and mad than even the brute Creatures: *The Ox knoweth his Owner, and the Ass his Master's Crib*; but *Israel doth not know, my People doth not consider*. Yea, *the Stork in the Heavens knoweth her appointed Time, and the Turtle, and the Crane, and the Swallow observeth the Time of their coming*; but *my People knoweth not the Judgment of the Lord*. O! what mad Fools are natural Men until this Month. *Psalms l. 21. Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself*; but the Lord says, *he will let them know other Things*: And indeed in this Month, which is the Beginning of Months, they begin to see that they were afar off, that they fed upon Hog's Meat; yea, they were little less than starved.

Fifthly, It may be said to be the Beginning of Months, inasmuch as in this Month Believers are married to the Lord, and a Divorce is put into the Hands of former Owners. This is the Month *Abib*, wherein they, like *Rebekah*, met *Isaac*, and went into his Tent: It is like the Month wherein *Ruth* met with her Kinsman *Boaz*, who married her, and so shewed Kindness unto the Dead and unto the Living. In this Marriage-Month it is, that they have the Marriage-Ring and the Marriage-Robe put upon them; *Bring here the best*

Robe, and put it upon him, and a Ring upon his Finger: That is, in this Month *Abib*, there are very generous Love-Tokens, particular Presents made to the Soul. Our first Parents, as soon as they had lost their Innocence, they saw that they were naked, Sin made them naked; so *Israel's* Sin, in the Matter of the golden Calf, made them naked: Well, but when they are brought to the Marriage-Supper, it is with the Bridegroom's Garment upon them, so that they are fit to appear in the Presence of the King, *Psalms* xlv. 13, 14. *The King's Daughter is all-glorious within; her Cloathing is of wrought Gold: She shall be brought unto the King in Raiment of Needle-Work, &c.* The wearing of this Robe, put upon her in the Marriage-Day, makes it memorable unto her; for she was given to understand, that when this Robe was put upon her, she was never more to put it off, nor neyer to appear in any other Dress in all Times coming: Quite different from the Dress which the Bride appears in upon the Marriage-Day; she is seldom seen in it again, but upon some particular Days. Well, but the Saints are never to be seen but in this Suit; yea, God will not look with any Pleasure upon them, but as he sees them dressed in the Robe which they got in this Marriage-Month *Abib*; which Robe is like *Joseph's* Coat, of many Colours; or like the Garments of the elder Brother, wherein *Jacob* got the Blessing; or like the Garments which *Israel* wore in the Wilderness, that did not grow worse by wearing.— Yea, another Love-Token Christ's Spouse

Spouse, the Soul, had in this Month, was a Ring as well as a Robe. What shall I call it? The Soul had a Pledge in this Month, that God would never leave, never forsake it, and that he loves it with an everlasting Love. This was the Ring which you got, O Christians! The Uses of the Ring, mentioned in Scripture, are two. It was used first as a Piece of Honour; secondly, as a Signature or Seal. For the first, we read how *Pharaoh* took a Ring from off his Hand, and put it upon *Joseph's* Hand, and made him ride in the second Chariot which he had: So the King took off his Ring, and gave it to *Mordecai*, when he honoured him. Again for the second; *Haman* sealed the Writing with the King's Ring. Well, in this Month *Abib*, the Beginning of Months, God does give a Ring to the Soul, in Token of that Honour and Respect which he puts upon it. He takes the Person, as *Pharaoh* did *Joseph*, gives him the Ring for his Hand, and makes him ride near his sacred Person; brings him to his Presence-Chamber, to his Bed-Chamber, as he did *Abraham* and *Moses*; and then he speaks to him Face to Face, as a Man doth to his Friend; yea, he leans upon his Bosom, hence *the Secret of the Lord is with them that fear him*. Yea, they are honoured in this Month, inasmuch as they are made Kings and Priests unto God: *Who hath loved us, and washed us from our Sins in his own Blood; and hath made us Kings and Priests unto God and to the Lamb*. Strange Honour! high Dignity indeed! Kings and Priests to God and his Father, *Rev. i. 4*. To be a King unto a Man,

and a Priest unto a King, is the very Summit and Pinnacle of earthly Honour; but to be a King unto God, Kings and Priests unto God, what Honour is this! 2dly, This Ring also was used as a Signature: The Writing was sealed with the King's Ring; so does the Soul receive this Signature in this Month *Abib*, Ephes. i. 13. *In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of Promise.* Two Things, I think, this Ring shews the Soul: First, as a Ring, it assures; secondly, as a Ring, it distinguishes. As a Ring upon this Day, it assures in this Marriage-Month. O! what Assurance is that whereby the Soul is made sure to God, and God sure to the Soul! The Foundation of God standeth sure, having this Seal; the Lord knoweth them that are his; the Spirit makes God sure to him, the Spirit reads his Witness, and makes the Soul clear in the Things of God. Yea, 2dly, God by this Love-Token that he gives in this Month the Ring, this Seal, he distinguishes the Soul from the World, *John xv. 19. Ye are not of the World, but I have chosen you out of the World.* God sets his own Image, the Impression of his own Likeness, on the good Man, as the Seal doth on the Wax.

The Ild HEAD was, to inquire what Kind of a Year this Month is the Beginning of, and what are the observable Things which happen in this Year. Where I would,

First, Consider the different Parts of this Year, and then speak to the observable Occurrences obtaining

taining therein. Why then, this Year may be considered as to the Beginning of it ; as to the Progress ; and as to the Period, or the Close or End of it. As to the first of these, the Beginning of this Year, I understand the Time wherein there is the begun Deliverance from spiritual Bondage, through the powerful Appearance of God for a Person or People ; the Time which God hath fixed to favour *Zion* ; the Time wherein the Decree brings forth, which had been long travailing in Pregnancy, if I may so speak : Such, you know, was the Time of *Israel's* Deliverance out of *Egypt*. The *Israel* of God had been no less than four hundred and thirty Years now in *Egypt*, they had been long travailing as it were in Birth ; and indeed, to have looked upon the Hardness of their Travail, one could hardly have expected that they should live. But as the most violent Throws are sometimes before the Deliverance ; so was it the Case with poor *Israel*, in the Beginning of this Month *Abib*. When Deliverance was not now spoken of as being a Thing at a Distance from them, but was actually applied to them, in that Night wherein they came out of the Land of *Egypt* in so observable a Manner : Just so is the Case with the poor Soul ; it hath possibly for Months, nay, for Years been travailing, in Birth and in Bondage, when God says, Yea, and does with respect to it as he did to *Israel*, *Exod. iii. 7, 8. And the Lord said, I have surely seen the Affliction of my People which are in Egypt ; and have heard their Cry, by reason of their Task-Masters :*

For

For I know their Sorrows. And I am come down to deliver them out of the Hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them, &c. In the Beginning of this Year then, there is an actual Deliverance applied to the *Israel* of God; they are now brought back from *Baschan's* Hill, and from the Sea-devouring Deeps: The happy Hour is now come; the Vision which had tarried, is now made to speak. — Well then, with respect to the observable Things which take Place in the Beginning of this Year: Why, 1st then, about the Beginning of this Year, if I am not mistaken, there are very loud and observable Thunders, heard generally by God's *Israel*; sometimes the Year is ushered in with very astonishing Thunders. You know it was about the Beginning of this Year, this observable Month *Abib*, that God came down upon Mount *Sinai*, with the fiery Law, with thundering Loudness, and the Voice of Words, that *Israel* was much alarmed, and intreated that they might no more hear that dreadful Voice: *Speak thou to us, say they to Moses; but let not the Lord speak, lest we die; and whatsoever the Lord saith, that will we do.* So indeed the poor Soul, about the Beginning of this Month, is sometimes brought to the Mount, which burns more than those in *Sicily*, *Etna* and *Vesuvius*; I mean, to Mount *Sinai*; and there indeed, if you could see the Countenances the Camp of *Israel* wore, when they were Witnesses to what the Lord was doing; such doth the poor Soul wear: Then it trembles; it fears that the next Flash from the fiery Mountain may consume it; and

and hence it cries out, as those Men did in *Acts* ii. 37. *Men and Brethren, what shall we do to be saved?* or, as the poor Convict did, *Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* As *Israel* desired *Moses*, who was a typical Mediator, to speak to them; so the Soul earnestly longs, that the meek and meet Mediator Christ, their Brother, may speak to them, for they cannot bear the threatening Voice. Why, if I may so speak, I know the Soul, which hath been upon the Beginning of this Year, is like a Man seized at Midnight, and alarmed with his House and Family all a Fire. O! he cries, Help, what shall I do, whither shall I go? So indeed the Soul cries out, Help, help, I am undone; for it is not only like him who hath his House in Flames about him, but it hath the Flames of Fire within it: The Man is all in a Flame, and he is ready to think that Hell-Fire hath already taken hold upon him; and hence he cries, "O! that I knew a Place in Heaven or in Earth to hide myself in, a Water which would cool the burning Flame."—But when I am speaking thus, my dear Brethren, I am jealous, some of God's dear Children, yea, I think I hear them saying, "Why, I am afraid then I have never entered this Month, the Year is not begun with me." Why, in Answer to your Case, remember that I told you, this is more generally God's Way, but not universally; it hath been, I know, the Way with many, but not with all such as have been long in *Egypt*, and learned the Manners of the *Egyptians*: God sees it requisite to bring them from these Manners, by shewing

shewing them a moral Law ; and when he gives them this Law and this Rule, he does it sometimes as a Schoolmaster doth read his Rules to his Scholars, at the same time he reads, he hath his Rod, and whips them for not regarding them.— But others again, are like the Children of *Israel* in the Beginning of this Year : They are brought out of *Egypt* without any Noise, all is hush and quiet, not so much as a Dog moves his Tongue against them ; their Deliverance is as it were like *Israel's* at Midnight, for the Lord brought them out of *Egypt* by Night ; at a Time that every thing was not to be seen, many Things were dark ; however, they were brought out : And this they can say, with the blind Man, that though they know not how or who it was that healed them ; yet this they know, that whereas they were blind, now they see. So can the Soul say, “ Whereas I was in *Egypt*, now I am in the Land which flows with Milk and Honey.”— Yea, my Friends, I would have you to observe here, that many Children came with *Israel* from *Egypt* in this Beginning of the Year, and they were as actually delivered as the Aged : But then they were not so sensible, could not tell, could not remember the Night, in which they were delivered. So many of God's Children are like *Israel*, the *Hebrews* Children, which came up out of the Land ; they possibly cannot remember these remarkable Things, but they presently, in some Degree, know that they are not in *Egypt* now. If so, make yourselves quiet,
 O Chil-

O Children of God ! upon this Point, and thank God that he hath brought you out so insensibly : For, I assure you, it is not desirable to be at the Bottom of the burning Mount ; it is not sweet to hear the Howlings of the Damned ; to be at the Mouth of Hell alone for a few Minutes, expecting to drop in every Moment, as some have been, is no agreeable Situation. But then, 2dly, In the Beginning of this Year, the Fountain of the great Deeps of the Love of God towards a lost World are broke open ; and now they see his Love in sending his Son and his Spirit : *God so loved the World, that he gave his only-begotten Son.* Then as the Lord told *Israel*, that *He did not choose them, nor set his Love upon them, because they were more in Number than other People ; for,* says he, *you were the fewest of all People ; but because he loved you, and because he would keep his Oath.* Then the Souls of Believers see the Salvation of God in its sovereign Light, and stand astonished : “ Why were not we drowned in the Red-Sea of *Jehovah's* Wrath, as well as the *Egyptians* ? Why was the Way made for us, the Passage for us, to the Land of Rest, while the very same Passage did ruin others, according to the awful Prediction, *This Child is set for the falling and rising again of many in Israel ?* ” O ! the Answer is at hand, because he loves you, because he loves you ; can I give the Reason of his Being ? then might I give the Reason of his Loving ; and because he would keep his Oath. Here then is a Door open into the divine Covenant,
and

and the Display of it, in the Beginning of this Year: *Mercy shall be built up for ever. I have made a Covenant with my Chosen; I have sworn unto David my Servant.* Hence, in the Beginning of this Year, God brings near his Righteousness and his Salvation, and that even to the stout-hearted Sinner: *Hearken unto me, ye Stout-hearted, and far from Righteousness; behold, I bring my Righteousness near, and my Salvation shall not tarry: Behold, I place Salvation in Zion, for Israel my Glory.* 3dly, Again, in the Beginning of this Year, another observable Thing is this, viz. That there is a Way discovered to the Soul, which leads to the Land of Rest and Promise; Christ, the Way, the Truth, and the Life: Yea, the Gates of the City of Refuge are set quite open in the Beginning of this Year, and a Cry made in the Ears of Souls, *Turn ye to your Strong-holds; yea, to your Strong-holds, ye Prisoners of Hope.* There is a Way discovered to them, wherein the wayfaring Man, though a Fool, shall walk, and not err therein: So, he says, *a high Way shall be there, and a Way of Holiness shall it be called; I will make all my Mountains a Way, and my high Ways shall be exalted.* Now the Soul is upon its March to the Land of Promise: *The Breaker is gone up before them; they have broken up, and have passed through the Gate, and are gone out by it; and their King shall pass before them, and the Lord at the Head of them.* The Lord is now the Saint's Shepherd, who leads him by still Waters, and makes him to lie down upon the
green

green Pastures : And now his Fellowship is truly with the Father, and with his Son Christ; and the Blood of Christ cleanseth him from all Sin. Yea, he is now made to walk in that Way which will infallibly bring him to the Land of Rest; though he may seem to go through many Cross-Roads, and over many Mountains, through many dangerous Places : *For neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor Things to come, nor present, shall be able to separate him from the Love of Christ.* 4thly, In the Beginning of this Year, the Door of God's Banqueting-House is open, and the Manna falls in full Showers about the spiritual *Israel*, that they have no lack; as it was with the natural Manna, *he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack*: Hence as *Israel*, when they first saw the Manna upon the Ground, said, *What is it? It is a Portion, it is Manna*; so the Soul sees its Portion; yea, it is the Bread which was promised it, that he sent from Heaven to it, Angels Food. Thus God is employed every Day, while his People are journeying, in raining each Morning plentifully upon them, and they employed in gathering and eating what God is pleased to give to them; pointing forth to us, how God gives Christ, the Bread of Life; and how those to whom he is given, do not sit still in their Houses totally idle, but are employed, by Faith and Obedience, in making use of Christ, as *Israel* was of the Manna: He did rain it about their Tent-Doors; but if they were such as would not
so

so much as stir from their Houses, they might starve. It is remarkable that each new Day brought its Provision along with it; and if any was so very provident, as to provide in one Day for two ensuing, save the Day before the Sabbath, then it stunk, it bred Worms: Pointing forth to us, that every Day we are to be dependent upon God for our daily Bread; and if there is a Caring beyond what God hath appointed, that Care will be attended with the Curse instead of the Blessing; such Manna will breed Worms, it will stink. But then again,

Secondly, This Year, of which the Month *Abib* is the Beginning, may be considered as to the Progress of it; I mean that which is more immediately connected with a Course of Sanctification: And indeed, through the Course of this Year, there is a Diversity of Dispensations, outward and inward. Sometimes the *Israel* of God enjoy Health, at other Times they are ailing and sick; sometimes it is Winter, and sometimes it is Summer with them; sometimes Day, and sometimes Night; sometimes cold, and sometimes hot; sometimes Adversity, and at other Times Prosperity; sometimes he frowns upon them, at other Times he favours; sometimes Heaven smiles, and at another Time of the Year Heaven frowns; sometimes in the Course of this Year their Sun is clear, at another Time it is clouded; sometimes they are in the Mount, and at another Time down in the Valley: Sometimes the Candle of the Lord shines clear upon their Heads, and, through the Light thereof,

thereof, they walk through dark Places; another Time they go mourning without the Sun, crying, "O! that it was with us as in Months past; O! that we knew where we might find him." Sometimes they are pinched with Hunger and Thirst, and their Souls faint within them; and at other Times he anoints their Heads with Oil; yea, their Heads lack no Ointment, and their Cup runs over: Sometimes they fall into the Ditch of Sin, that their Clothes abhor them; at other Times their Wings are like the Wings of a Dove, covered with Silver, and their Feathers with yellow Gold. Upon the Whole, all these Things are still tending towards, and will at length terminate in their true Landing-Place, for *all Things work together for Good to them that love God.*

USE. Hence see how good God is to *Israel*; so the Psalmist speaks, *Truly God is good to Israel.* O! what Love is to be seen in the Lord's Method of Grace? Every redeemed Soul may indeed say, as the Jews did when they saw Jesus weep at *Lazarus's* Grave, *Behold how he loved him!* so may we say, Behold, how he hath loved you, in delivering you from Death! when your Neighbours next Door to you, like *Israel*, had nothing but Death in their Houses, you have escaped. O! Child of God, I know not what Views you have of the Deliverance done for you in this Year; I am afraid you think not so much of that as could be wished: But at the End of the Year, when you come to pass *Jordan*, and have your Lot in the Land, you will say, *Great and*

marvelous are all thy Works, Lord God Almighty! &c.

What Age are you? as *Pharaoh* asked *Jacob*; are you Ten, Twenty, Thirty, Forty, Fifty? Are you arrived to the very Stretch of Life, Threescore Years and Ten, and know you any thing of this? If not I may say, your Days have been few and evil. And if you know something of it, you will know something of what I have been treating, of what took Place the Beginning of the Year.



S E R M O N

S E R M O N XI.

The Marvels of the Month ABIB.

EXOD. xii. 2. *and* DEUT. xvi. 1.

This Month shall be unto you the Beginning of Months; it shall be the first Month of the Year to you. Observe the Month of Abib, and keep the Passover unto the Lord thy God; for in the Month of Abib the Lord thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by Night.

THE *second* Head in the Method, was to inquire what Kind of a Year this Month is the Beginning of. — We have been essaying to consider, (1st) The Beginning of this Year; (2dly) The Progress of it; (3dly) The Period and Close of it. — We have observed divers Things with respect unto the Beginning of this Year; and would have you advert to an Observation or two more upon it. Why then, in the Beginning of this Year, the Manna began to be rained down upon *Israel*, which never left them till they entered within the Confines of *Canaan*, and began to eat

of the Corn of the Country : So the Soul, delivered from spiritual Bondage in the Beginning of this Year, he begins to eat of the true Manna, the marvellous Manna, Christ, so that it shall never leave him ; they could not live without Christ, this Bread, in the Wilderness. — Again, another Thing that is observable in the Beginning of this Year, in which they came up out of the Land of *Egypt*, is that of the cloudy Pillar, which was a Pillar of Cloud by Day unto them, and a Pillar of Fire by Night ; they were very happily saluted with this Signal of the Lord's Care, soon after they left *Egypt* : Yea, the God-like Pillar appeared when their Danger was visible ; and by the Direction of this Pillar, all their Decampments, Marchings and Encampments, were regulated ; immediately after their marching out of the Land of *Egypt*, God indulged them with his divine *Shekinab*, *Exod. xiii.*

17. And it came to pass when Pharaoh had let the People go, that God led them not through the Way of the Land of the Philistines, although that was near : For God said, Lest peradventure the People repent, when they see War, and they return to Egypt.

Observe then, that in the Beginning of this Year, *Israel* are generally much indulged, they are dandled upon the Knees, they are carried in the Arms, they are not let see their Enemies, their Number, Strength and Power. The Children of God do not so immediately, upon the very Minute or Month of their first leaving the Land of *Egypt*, meet with this as afterwards in the Progress of the Year, as you may see in the Sequel : *God led them not through*

through the Way of the Land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, *Lest peradventure the People repent when they see War.* Christ told his Disciples the same Thing, viz. that He had many Things to speak unto them, but they were not able to bear it: And so the Apostle speaks, there is a *Need be* for feeding with Milk, and not with strong Meat or Drink, because of their Weakness.— But then in prosecuting our Purpose in the Beginning of this Year, there is a Pillar of Fire by Night, and a Pillar of a Cloud by Day, *Exod. xiii. 21.* *And the Lord went before them by Day in a Pillar of a Cloud, to lead them the Way; and by Night in a Pillar of Fire, to give them Light; to go by Day and Night.* Christ, and the Spirit of Christ, is that Pillar which appears to his People, as they pass forward in their Journey: *My Spirit shall not depart from them, Isa. lix. 19—21.* Yea, you will observe in *Exod. xiv. 19, 20.* *And the Angel of God, which went before the Camp of Israel, removed, and went behind them; and the Pillar of the Cloud went from before their Face, and stood behind them. And it came between the Camp of the Egyptians, and the Camp of Israel; and it was a Cloud and Darknes to them, but it gave Light by Night to these; so that the one came not near the other all the Night.* Note, That it was not only the Director unto them, but here it is acting the Part of the special Protector; it was Darknes to the *Egyptians*, but it gave Light to *Israel*; the Side which was next the *Egyptians* was dark, but that next the Camp of *Israel* was clear. So indeed is it with regard unto

the Church, that same Christ, that same Word, which is dark to them, it is divinely clear to God's *Israel*; that same Word, that same Christ, that same Spirit, which preserves *Israel*, destroys the *Egyptians*, Numb. ix. 15 — Again, about the Beginning of this Year, the Rock runs richly towards Saints, as it did to *Israel*; yea, the Waters which were formerly bitter, as *Marab*, become sweet, they now eat of the Tree thrown therein: Yea, they have some pleasant Encampments in the Beginning of this Year, as *Israel* had after they left the Land of *Egypt*, Exod. xv. Lastly, what is that to say, these Waters of Affliction, these Things which seem dreadful, bitter to the Soul now, in virtue of the Tree of Life, Christ being in them, behold, they are sweet. Thus it is with the Soul, about the Beginning of this Year, when it is brought out of *Egypt* and Bondage, it was ready to ruminate upon the Difficulties which lay in the Way of Religion; perhaps the Parents were in the Way, that were the bitter Enemies to Religion; the Husband or the Wife were in the Way, that was an Enemy; some Friend, some Relation, some Master, or the like; and hence these were like the bitter Waters of *Marab*: But when you saw the Tree in the midst of the Waters, then those very Waters which tasted bitter before, became sweet to the Soul. This is like that Saint, who, when he had lost a dear Child, it was like *Marab's* Water unto him, until he retired some time alone; and then returning, with a Smile upon his Countenance, said, " he would part with a Child every Day,

Day, to enjoy what he had done upon the Loss of that." O! to see Christ in a Cross! to see Christ in Reproach, in Affliction, in Temptation! to see Christ in Persecution! to see Christ in the Frowns of Foes and of Friends! must needs make the Waters of *Marah*, which were formerly bitter to the Soul, sweet. Then indeed the Soul likes to encamp at such an *Elim*, where were twelve Wells of Water. — Again, another Thing observable about the Beginning of this Year, after *Israel* comes up out of the Land of *Egypt*; they seem to make very rapid Progress towards the Land of Promise, to go over more Ground about the Beginning of this Year, than what they do for all the other Months of the Year. This was the very Case with God's *Israel* when they came up out of the Land of *Egypt*; they were not long in being at the Borders of the blessed Land; and most expeditiously they sent over twelve Spies to reconnoitre the Country; and no Doubt but *Israel* had raised Expectations of entering upon the Land very soon: But whereas the major Part of the Spies bring back a bad, a discouraging Report of the Land; that there were *Anakims* in the Way of entering it; that there were strong Barrier-Towns along their Frontiers, and the like; in short, that there was little Probability of their being made Possessors of it, for they had been making their Observations for forty Days, and such was the State of Things. Well, when the Children of *Israel* heard this Report, *Numb. xiv.* they lifted up their Voices and wept, and then

began speaking of making a Captain, to return again to *Egypt*. O! for Shame! O! sad! one would have thought *Israel* had never seen any thing of what God had done for them, in all the Signs and Wonders wrought in the Land of *Egypt*; that they had been asleep when they travelled through the *Red-Sea*, that should reason thus concerning the taking of the Land. What! were they brought out of one of the then most famous and flourishing Nations in the World, the Land of *Egypt*, through the Arm of the Lord, when the Lord pleased to cause to perish *Pharaoh* and his House, and to preserve them through the *Red-Sea*; and was He not able to beat down the Walls of Cities, or to trip up the Heels of the Giants? But what Sort of Men were they which were sent? or rather, what Sort of a Sin is that Sin of Unbelief? Why, I think, we may say of it as that King said of the Prophet, who never prophesied Good of him or of his Father's House. So indeed Unbelief never, never did, nor never, never will bring up a good Report of God and of his House; and the Lord, as in *Numb. xiv.* turns them back by the Way of the *Red-Sea*, and they then are forty Years in the Wilderness.— Well, such also we say is the Case as to the poor Soul, which is brought up out of *Egypt* in the Beginning of this Year; he seems to make pretty rapid Progress towards the Land of Promise; he seems to have gone over more Ground in the first Month of the Year, than he does all the remaining Parts of it: For either Unbelief, Ignorance, Carnality, Sloth, or bye
Ends,

Ends, bring up a bad Report of the Land; and hence the poor Soul, though it is come up out of *Egypt*, yet it is carried back again to the *Red-Sea* in the *Wilderness*. Which brings me now to the

Second Particular under this Head, to consider this Year in the Progress of it. God says unto his People, as he did to *Israel*, Deut. ii. 1—4. *Then we turned, and took our Journey into the Wilderness, by the Way of the Red-Sea, as the Lord spake unto me; and we compassed Mount Seir many Days. And the Lord spake unto me, saying, Ye have compassed this Mountain long enough, turn you Northward: You must now set your Faces to that cold Quarter of the Weather. And command thou the People, saying, Ye are to pass through the Coast of your Brethren the Children of Esau, which dwell in Seir, and they shall be afraid of you; take ye good Heed unto yourselves therefore.* Now in the Progress of this Year, such are the Difficulties and Afflictions which they meet with, that indeed they sometimes say, as *Israel* did, Numb. xxi. 4. *and the Souls of the People were much discouraged because of the Way,* when they journeyed from Mount *Hor*, by Way of the *Red-Sea*: For by and by, in the Progress of this Year, they are bit and stung with Serpents, some of whom died; others had the brazen Serpent set before them, that whenever they were bit by the fiery Serpents, they should look upon the brazen one, as being the Ordinance of God for their Salvation: Not that there was a natural Virtue in that Piece of Brass which God set up to
cure

cure such Persons, no more than there was in the Waters of *Jordan* to heal the Leprosy of *Naaman*; but in virtue of its being the Ordinance of Heaven for that Effect. Well, it is in the Course of this Year, the Soul which was delivered out of *Egypt*, is stung by Serpents. What Serpents? Why,

(1st) There is the old Serpent the Devil, who is called the great red Dragon. It is strange, that some observe with respect to the Dragons, that they haunt principally Trees of Frankincense; hence is that Account: *Angues Aquarum, Serpentes Terrarum, Dracones Templorum*; that is, Snakes of the Water, Serpents of the Earth, and Dragons of the Temple. Those whom the Devil is sure of, he doth not disturb, because they are his own dear Children: But the Woman that is driven to the Wilderness, the great red Dragon vomits forth Floods of Fury, of Fire, and Poison against her. It is a hard Thing to drive away Dragons. When they want to cure those who are bit with Serpents, the most sovereign Remedy found out, in healing the Sting, and expelling their Poison, is something which is extracted from themselves, as their Oil: So the most sovereign Remedy that ever was or ever will be found out to destroy the old Serpent, is something that was once shewn in the Similitude and Likeness of a Serpent, namely, the Seed of the Woman. O! nothing will cure the Soul when this bites, but *Sanguis Medici*, the Blood of the Physician: *As Moses lifted up the Serpent in the Wilderness, so shall the Son of Man be lifted up.*— But
note

note further, that they were fiery Serpents which infested the Camp of *Israel* in the Progress of that Year: Pointing forth to us the Nature of those Serpents that meet us after we have come out of *Egypt*; such as that fiery Serpent the Salamander, which loves to live in the Fire: I mean, the unsufferable and unreasonable Contention in the Camp of God, more the Salamander of our own Spirits, than the soft, sweet, and healing Spirit of God. Sometimes there is the fiery Serpent of some Lust, such as Anger: Wrath is cruel, Anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before Envy? This Serpent had almost made the Prophet *Jonah* mad; he was so bit with it, that he did not know what he was about. There is Malice, a Serpent that slays the silly One. There are fiery Serpents of burning Lusts; these are a kind of Monsters, which are half Flesh, and half Spirit; Part of them partake of the Mind, and others of the Body.— Well, the Souls of the People of God are discouraged within them, because of the Way in this Part of the Year, when they are thus bit and stung.

(2dly) In this Part of the Year, there are very bloody Wars which break out upon the Soul; and very formidable Enemies come out against God's *Israel*, who will not permit them to pass peaceably along; such as *Sibon* King of *Heshbon*, and *Og* King of *Basban*, that would not suffer them to pass through the Land; hence they are obliged to engage them in pitched Battles: There were the *Amalekites*, the *Amorites*, and such like, that they war with in journeying towards the Land;
yea,

yea, and before they came to enjoy the peaceable Possession of the Land: As they had War in their Way, which was like a foreign War, so they had intestine War at Home. The Lord speaks of seven Nations greater and mightier than they; the *Hivites*, the *Hittites*, the *Gergasites*, the *Amorites*, the *Canaanites*, the *Perrizites*, and the *Jebusites*. Yea, this War in Process of Time is still nigher; the House of *Saul* come against the House of *David*, and the House of *David* against the House of *Saul*; the House of *Israel* is against the House of *Judab*, and the House of *Judab* against the House of *Israel*; *Ephraim* is against *Manasseh*, and *Manasseh* against *Ephraim*, and they together against *Judab*; *Sibon* King of *Heshbon*, and *Og* King of *Basban*, the *Amalekites*, and others, were Powers which opposed their Progress towards the promised Land. Thus, in like manner, ere the Soul is brought to see the Land of Promise, or it is in Possession thereof, yea, before it comes to the saving Knowledge of Christ, and is possessed of saving Faith in him, there are some very powerful Enemies to oppose its March; even when the Soul is living under the Convictions of its Sin and Misery, not being as yet brought to actual Believing, there comes out against it some big and powerful King, like *Sibon* or *Og*. Sometimes there are these two Kings, Presumption and Despair; Presumption speaks to the Soul thus, when it is under Conviction, "Why, Soul, dost thou give thyself such Disquiet about Heaven and Hell? dost thou think that a wise and merciful God ever made thee to
make

make thee eternally miserable? did he make thee to damn thee, though thou shouldest do all in thy Power to be saved? Sure, says Presumption, he is a God of Mercy, and he never meant any such Thing: Yea, dost thou not see Men of all Ranks, Princes, Priests and People, who know much more and better than thou dost? dost thou not see the Liberties they allow themselves in those Things thou art uneasy about? they can swear, and lie, and lust after the Pleasures of this Life, and that without Pain, and therefore why dost thou disquiet thyself? for it is to be hoped that these Men, through the Mercy of God, and the Merits of Christ, will be saved, as well as your precise Puritans or pious People. Yea, says Presumption further, dost thou not see what confirms this from Scripture? Did not *Adam* break the Command of God, to please his Palate or his Wife? but God was not so cruel as to destroy him for that Sin: Did not *Lot* and *Noah* get drunk, and commit Incest? yet they are said to be upright and good Men; God was not so surly and censorious with them, as some of your sanctified Ones are: What, did not *Moses* commit Murder, and *David* Adultery and Murder both, with other very bad Things? yet he was still a Man after God's own Heart, and he is gone to Heaven." Thus doth King Presumption urge upon the poor Soul seized with Convictions of Sin, and tells him, that "he need not fear, much greater Sinners than he have been saved; and if such as he were not saved, Christ's coming into the World would be to no Purpose."

pose." Thus the poor Soul gets such an Onset here, that it scarce recovers; yea, many have been mastered by this King Presumption: When they have been about to march towards the Land of Rest, he hath saluted them by the Way; they have fallen, and broken their Necks upon and over this Precipice: Others indeed have fallen and broken their Shins, and after have begun to walk forward, finding that it was all a Lie and false, that King Presumption had flattered them with; for God hath said, *though Hand join in Hand, yet Iniquity shall not be unpunished: Wo unto the Wicked, for it shall be ill with him, for the Reward of his Hands shall be given him.* — Well then, King Despair appears next against the Soul, like unto another gigantic Og, and he fights it in a quite different Form from what King Presumption did; for Presumption fights the convinced Sinner, by representing God all Mercy, but Despair, no Mercy at all. "O! (now Despair tells the Soul) how can you think to be saved, and possess the promised Land, for you have sinned against all Mercy, and can you expect Mercy? You have often bid the Devil take your Soul, and you have spent the most precious Part of your Days in his Service; and do you think that God is such a one as to take up with the Devil's Leavings? You have laughed at all Reproof, and therefore he will now laugh at your Calamity, and mock when your Fear cometh. Yea, since you begun to read, and pray, and hear the Word, you have ruined yourself by your Religion; for you have sinned the

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unpardonable Sin, which hath neither Forgiveness in this Life, nor in the Life that is to come." O! the poor Soul is very hard put to it here; those bitter Warriors wound it so, that it is ready to say, as the poor distressed Traveller did in a strange Land, when he met with a Native of his own Country, and inquired of him how far it was to such a Part of the World, answered, so many Hundreds of Miles: Alas! says the poor, dispirited and weary Man, I think then I shall never get there. So indeed the Soul, that is set upon and sunk down by King Despair, it is now ready to say of it so and so, alas! I think, alas! I am afraid I shall never get there. — Thus, my Beloved, if these two Kings are conquered, then *Israel* marches forward. Then in their Progress, the *Amalekites*, the *Amorites*, and the like, are upon them, and there is hot and bloody Work on both Sides; sometimes in one and the same Day *Amalek* prevails, and *Israel* prevails alternately; and if *Israel* prevail, it is not because of their own Strength or Power, but because *Moses's* Hands are held up for them: So if the Child of God get any Advantage over its Enemies, it is not because of any Strength of its own, but it is because the Hand of a Mediator is held up for it; He hath prayed for thee, otherways Satan would sift thee as Wheat. But the more outward Enemies that the Children of God have to war with, are the World and the Devil, which the Apostle calls an evil present World. O! the wicked World is a very great Enemy to the People of God, in their
March

March towards the Land, for it is a blind World : *The World by Wisdom knew not God*; O cursed Knowledge, which renders the Soul more a Stranger to Christ ! *Men are wise to do Evil, but how to do Good they know not.* It is a seducing and a deceiving World ; the Prophet found it so, and God's People to this Day find it so : He had often wet Eyes upon this Account, *Jer. ix. 1, 2. O that my Head were Waters, and mine Eyes a Fountain of Tears, that I might weep Day and Night for the Slain of the Daughter of my People ! Ob that I had in the Wilderness a Lodging-place of wayfaring Men, that I might leave my People, and go from them ; for they be all Adulterers, an Assembly of treacherous Men.* Micah vii. 1. to the same Purpose. *Trust not a Friend, put no Confidence in a Guide ; keep the Door of thy Mouth from her that layeth in thy Bosom.* A sad Case indeed, War with a Witness, that we cannot trust a Friend, nor follow a Guide, nor dare divulge a Secret to the Person that should be as our own Soul. — Yea, further, it is a troublous World ; *Noah's Dove* will not find a Place in it for the Sole of its Foot to rest upon ; this is not their Rest, for it is polluted : *In the World we shall have Tribulation* ; whosoever would live godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer Persecution. — Again, there is another Enemy ; he that is called the God of this World, the Prince of the Power of the Air, who wars with the Woman and the Remnant of her Seed : *Michael* and his Angels fought the Dragon and his Angels. To the same Purpose the Apostle to the *Ephesians* speaks,

speaks, Chap. vi. 12. *We wrestle not against Flesh and Blood, but against Principalities and Powers, against the Rulers of the Darknes of this World, and against spiritual Wickedness in high Places.* Here, you see, is close Combating with the Enemy of our Souls: It is not a War at a Distance, but it is near; hence called a Wrestling, a Wrestling wherein the Devil takes hold of a Person, and he takes hold of the Devil, like two Wrestlers. But it is not with Flesh and Blood, with the World, with the Men of the World who are Flesh and Blood; but it is with Principalities and Powers, and the Rulers of the Darknes of this World, against spiritual Wickedness in high Places: It is against Principalities, not only Princes, but Principalities in the Abstract; they are not only powerful, but it is against the Powers of this World. Yea, and this Title which the Devil hath is no empty Title, a Name without a Power, but it is what he hath given too great Proofs of; for indeed we cannot well circumscribe his Power, we may observe it in the several Parts of the World: What is there in the World which he hath not Power over? The very Elements themselves are not free from his Power, such as Fire, Water, Wind, and the like. Fire indeed is the very Element which he lives in, it is *prepared for the Devil and his Angels*; and he can, if he is permitted, send it down, contrary to its Nature, from Heaven to Earth: Thus one of the Messengers told *Job, the Fire of God is fallen from Heaven, and hath burnt up the Sheep, and the Servants, and*

consumed them, and I only am escaped to tell thee,
 Job i. 16. It is called the Fire of God, though
 caused by Satan : It was not God, but Satan, who
 was the immediate Kindler of it ; and yet called
 the Fire of God, because of the Strangeness of the
 Fire. *Caryl* upon *Job* says, that Satan can do
 mighty Things ; command much of the Maga-
 zine of Heaven, where the dreadful Artillery,
 those fiery Meteors are : He says, he can dis-
 charge the great Ordnance of Heaven, Thunder
 and Lightning ; and, by his Art, he can make
 them more terrible and dreadful than they are in
 Nature. Again, Air is an Element where he
 now reigns, as he is the Prince of the Power of
 the Air : The Jews have a Tradition, that all the
 Space between the Earth and the Firmament is
 full of the Troops of evil Spirits, their Chiefs
 having their Residence in the Air ; *Augustin* and
Hierom tell us, that this was the Opinion of all
 the primitive Doctors. Thus being Prince of the
 Power of the Air, no Wonder that the Devil can
 violently move the Air, and cause Tempests and
 Storms : Thus the Messenger told *Job*, *there came*
a great Wind from the Wilderness, and smote the
four Corners of the House, and it fell upon the young
Men. And tho', says the above quoted Author,
 the Devil cannot raise so much Wind as will move
 a Feather, but when God saith, Go, and do this,
 yet then he can raise Wind enough to remove
 Mountains, and rase the Foundations of the
 strongest Buildings : Thus *Job's* Children were
 buried in the Ruins of their own House, as one
 calls

calls it, by a Puff from the Devil's Mouth. Yea, his Power is plain upon the Water; hence Gurnal, in his *Christian Armour*, says, he can hurl the Sea into such Commotion, that the Deep shall boil like a Pot, as if Heaven and Earth would meet; hence a very worthy Divine says, he cannot but think that the Devil was in the Storm, when the Waves beat into the Ship where Christ slept; for being awaked, *He rebuked the Sea, and said unto the Waves, Peace, be still, &c.*; a Word which he sometimes uses to the Devil, *Luke iv. 35.* The same Author adds; Earth, the very Mass of this Earth, he hath Power over: When the Lord asked him, *Whence comest thou?* he answered, *From going to and fro in the Earth, and from walking up and down in it,* Job ii. 2. Satan here speaks like a Prince, who had gone about his Country to view his Dominions and Provinces, his Kingdoms and his Cities; I come, says he, from surveying my several Places and Dominions: Hence, he doubts not but that he can raise Earthquakes, throw down strong Buildings, and move all Things. And with respect to the sensible Part of the World, whatever our modern Freethinkers may make of the Doctrine of Spirits, like the ancient Sadducees, the Scripture informs us, that the Devil can enter into the Bodies of Beasts, and actuate them at his Pleasure. The Instance of his entering into the Herd of Swine, both Jewish, Heathen, and Christian Writers agree in; and as he hath a Power over Beasts, he hath it also over the Bodies of Men: Hath he not possessed some, made them Lunatics,

and vexed them, that they have oftentimes fallen into the Water, and into the Fire? Hath he not made some deaf, and some dumb? *Matt. xvii. 15.* Yea, hath he not carried about Bodies in the Air? Did he not do it with respect unto our Lord himself, whom at one Time he set upon a Pinnacle of the Temple, at another upon a high Mountain? *Job* was another Instance of this sort, and the Daughter of the Woman of *Canaan* was another; and God only knows, if the Power and Malice of the Devil was not restrained, what dreadful Work we should have in the World. — Well, my Brethren, you see then that there is an external War with the Devil and the World in the Progress of this Year: Yea, as the Man who was possessed, when he was asked his Name, answered, *It is Legion, for we are many*; there were both Foot and Horse, Cavalry and Infantry, some Hundreds. And indeed, sometimes the Soul hath to fight with Troops of white Devils, sometimes with Troops of black Devils, and sometimes with Troops of red Devils: These Troops of white Devils are such, as our Lord speaks of, when he tells his Disciples, that *Satan transforms himself into an Angel of Light*: The Ministers of the Devil are dressed as the Ministers of Christ, yea, like Christ himself; hence false Christs. Since the Days of Christ, how hath the Church had to do with this white Devil, and she has not yet done with him? Christ points at such in his Sermon, *Matt. vii. 15. Beware of false Prophets, which come to you in Sheeps Clothing, but inwardly they are ravening Wolves.* But then there
are

are black Devils; these are Atheists, Deists, and the like; they shew their cloven Feet: These come to us with the Devil's Cockade in their Hat, and his Coat of Arms upon their Breast; yea, all the black Tribe of Debauchees, Ranters, Libertines, and the like: You will see of these black Devils almost every where; there are Troops of them, ungodly Men, *turning the Grace of God into Lasciviousness*. But then there are Troops of red Devils, which we have to fight with in the Way; these are bloody, persecuting Devils, such as Papists; this is the red Dragon which thirsts after human Blood. O! *Israel* hath suffered much in their March by this Enemy. Some observe, that this red Devil hath shed more Blood in Christendom, than was shed in all the Heathen War.— This red Devil, sometimes we have him to fight with in different Forms; he can kill by Poison, as well as by open Persecution; he can shed Blood, without ever touching the Person's Body; *their Words*, as the Psalmist speaks, *are Swords, their Tongues Spears*. O! this red Devil sometimes endeavours to murder the Christian's good Name, as well as to destroy his Body; the Peace of his Soul, as well as his Substance. Report, says the Enemies of *Jeremiab*, and we will report, *Jer. xx. 10*. Thus in some measure you see, that in the Course of this Year there is a War.

S E R M O N XII.

The Marvels of the Month ABIB.

EXOD. xii. 2. and DEUT. xvi. 1.

This Month shall be unto you the Beginning of Months; it shall be the first Month of the Year to you. Observe the Month of Abib, and keep the Passover unto the Lord thy God; for in the Month of Abib the Lord thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by Night.

WE come now to treat a little with regard unto the intestine War which breaks out in the Progress of this Year: Not only were there Mutinies in the Camp, upon *Israel's* March through the Wilderness, but even after they came to enter the Land of Promise, which was a Type of the Church; they then had a War within their own Bowels, in the very Bosom of the Nation: Yea, there were some Enemies which the Lord had sworn, that he would have War with them from Generation to Generation; there were the seven Nations formerly mentioned, greater and mightier

tier than they ; *Saul's* House and *David's* against each other ; *Israel* and *Judah*, distinct Tribes, disturbing each other. Well then, the Gospel of all this is confirmed in the bitter Experience of the Church ; for there are many Nations which are greater and mightier than they, there is many a bloody Battle within their own Bosoms ; with such Enemies there are many bitter Cries and grievous Groans heard, while the poor Soul is engaged in this Battle. This is a War which is not afar off, a foreign War, but it is near hand, at home, within hearing and seeing, yea, and feeling the Fate of it, as one says ; whose Words, though I quote not for the Elegance of the Poetry, yet for the experienced Verity of the Fact.

I saw the Fights, and heard the Captains shout,
And in each Battle saw who fac'd about.
I saw who wounded were, and who were slain,
And who when dead would come to Life again :
I heard the Cries of those that wounded were,
While others fought like Men bereft of Fear.
And while the Cry, *Kill, kill*, was in mine Ears,
The Gutters ran, not so with Blood as Tears.

First then, there is the Enemy of Self which they have to fight with in the Progress of this Year. There is the Chief, *Hab. i. 16.* a sacrificing to their own Net, and burning Incense to their own Drag. What is that to say, but just this ? That even in our religious Sacrifices and Services, we may be serving ourselves, and sacrificing to Self. Self is the first Cause, and the last End. T

Self gets such Ascendency, that it is a sad Charge God brings against Watchmen in *Isaiab's* Day: *They are all dumb Dogs, that cannot bark, every one looking for his Gain from his Quarter.* Here Self obtains a powerful Footing, even among the Prophets, and it gets Ground among the People: In short, it is such a sad Enemy, that nothing less will satisfy it but to have the Ascendency above God; it rivals the Almighty, and would set itself in the Place of God: For the Instructions that Self hath, are the same which were given unto the *Affyrian* Army, to fight neither with small nor great, but with the King of *Israel*; and indeed these are the Orders which Self hath to fight, neither with small nor great, but with the King of Heaven.

Now Self, in fighting against *Israel*, is formed into different Troops and Battalions; for there is Self-Will and his Troop, there is Self-Love and his Troop, there is Self-Praise and his Troop, there is Self-Ease and his Troop, there is Self-Interest and his Troop, there is Self-Righteousness and his Troop.

(1st) There is Self-Will and his Troop. This is an obdurate and hardened Dog; he is a most merciless Enemy, a most destructive Enemy, a most stubborn Enemy: For he not only fights furiously against God, but sometimes he fights with those very Troops which are confederate with him against God; he will take such sudden Turns, and push his Points so vigorously, that he will break through the very Troops which are confederate with him; for he will break through Self-Praise
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and his Troop, he will make them retreat and give Way to that Law-leading Troop of Self-Will; he will break through Self-Ease and his Troop, and he must give Way; yea, he will break through Self-Interest and his Troop, and Self-Righteousness and his Troop; for when he takes a sudden Turn in the Battle, none of those Troops fight or fire again. O Christian! this Enemy, Self-Will, is a very formidable Foe; I know not a Description which agrees better with this Enemy, Self-Will, than that which is given us of the great Leviathan in the 41st Chapter of the Book of *Job*: For we may say of him, *he is as firm as a Stone, yea, as hard as a Piece of the nether Milstone. He esteemeth Iron as Straw, and Brass as rotten Wood. The Arrow cannot make him flee; sling Stones are turned with him into Stubble. Darts are counted as Stubble; he laugheth at the shaking of the Spear. Upon Earth there is not his like, who is made without Fear. He is a King over all the Children of Pride.* He laughs sometimes at Reason, he laughs at Prudence, he laughs at Religion, yea, at the shaking of the Spear; all the Threatnings in the Law of God he laughs at. Well, Christians, this is one of the intestine Enemies you have within the Land to fight with.

(2d) There is Self-Love and his Troop we have to contend with. You know that the Sum of God's Law, given to *Israel*, was this; *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Strength, and with all thy Might; and thy Neighbour as thyself.* But Self-Love, and his Troop

Troop in the Soul, fights against this Law of God, in order to introduce and bring in the very Reverse and Opposite of it, *viz.* Thou shalt love thyself with all thy Might, with all thy Strength, &c. And, instead of loving its Neighbour as itself, it would attempt to make the Soul hate its Neighbour, hate its Brother, and hate its Fellow-Mortals: That, instead of loving him, it would hurt him; instead of praying for him, it would curse him; instead of pitying him, it envies him; instead of honouring him, it despises him. Why, this is another intestine Enemy which *Israel* had to war with in their Way, in the Course of this Year.

(3d) There is Self-Praise and his Troop, who fight against God and the Soul. Why, Self-Praise, and his Troop, strives to prevent the Praise from being given to God. He will let as few as possible (though God hath appeared for them) return and give him Praise; only one out of the Number of ten Lepers which were cleansed, returned to give Glory to God: Self-Praise seldom comes, like that one Leper, to Christ, after he was cleansed, with a loud Voice, glorifying of God, falling down on its Face at his Feet, giving Thanks. We may say of that Grace, which particularly engages and fights with this Enemy of Self-Praise, *Humility*, as our Lord did say unto that humble Leper, *Was there not ten cleansed? where are the Nine? There are not found that returns to give Glory to God, save this Stranger.* True Humility, true Self-Abasement, let me tell you, is like a Stranger,

Stranger, it is this Stranger indeed in our Land and in our Time : Whereas Self Praise struts about like a Crow in a Gutter, who picks up its Prey and Trash ; and, as it picks it up, hops about, and cokes over its own Carrion. Self-Praise walks like *Nebuchadnezzar*, with superb Looks, in his Palace, saying, *Is not this great Babylon that I have built, for the House of my Kingdom, by the Might of my Power, and for the Honour of my Majesty !* There are a great many *I's* and *My's* always in the Mouth of Self-Praise. If there is any thing that is great about the Creature, Self-Praise, like unto the heady Populace, will not give the Praise thereof to God ; but that which is really God's, it will assign to a Creature ; as in *Herod's* Case, they cried out, *This is the Voice of God, and not of Man : It was a bestowing a bastard Kind of Praise upon God, but at the very same Time blessing itself above God ;* like the Pharisee, *I thank God, says he, that I am not like other Men ; I fast twice a Week, I pay Tythes of all that I possess ; no Extortioner, Unjust, nor even as this Publican.* But the Grace that fights with this Enemy, I mean Humility, it often hangs down its Head, not daring to look up to Heaven ; and all that it can plead in its own Praise is to this Purpose, *Lord, be merciful to me a Sinner.* Well, this is another intestine Enemy which *Israel* hath to fight with.

(4thly) There is Self-Ease and his Troop. And this, my Beloved, is a sluggish, heavy Sort of an Enemy, which *Israel* hath to fight with. This Troop is like the Tribe of *Issachar*, of whom it is

is said, he is a strong *Ass*, couching down between two Burdens: And he saw that Rest was good, and the Land, that it was pleasant; and bowed his Shoulder to bear, and became a Servant unto Tribute. So Self-Ease and his Troop, he dislikes Fighting, he dislikes military Discipline; he cannot bear the Fatigues of War, such as Watching, Marching, lying in Camp, the Field, and suffering the Severities of the Weather: But, on the contrary, he cries out, even when Enemies are all around, as *Salomon's Sluggard* did, *Yet a little Sleep, a little Slumber, a little Folding of the Hands to Sleep.* "Why, says Self-Ease and his Troop, when fighting against God, I have put off my Coat, how shall I put it on again? I have washed my Feet, how shall I defile them?" And when it prevails, it lays the poor Christian upon his Bed; and you may guess what sort of a Fight the Christian makes, when he says, *By Night upon my Bed I sought him;* which Mr *Erskine* paraphrases thus *. — "O! says Self-

- * When Shadows dark, and Mountains high,
With stern united Might,
Conspir'd to hide him from mine Eye,
Whose Absence is my Night:

Upon my drowsy Bed alone,
Amidst my Slumbers tost,
I sought him; but my slothful Mone
And lazy Labour lost.

Love acting such a languid Part,
I felt a strange Disease;
An absent Lord, a careless Heart,
And Rest without Release.

Self-Ease and his Troop, I am indisposed, I cannot go about Duty, I cannot pray any at present, Rest is fitter for me; I cannot wait upon his Worship, the Weather is bad, it is either very hot or very cold, and we may as well stay at Home." Again, says Self-Ease, "it is very wearisome to be always watching and praying; therefore, with the Harlot, she says, *Come, let us take our Fill of Love until the Morning; let us solace ourselves with Love. Thus with her fair Speech she caused him to yield, and with the Flattering of her Lips she forced him. He goeth after her straightway, as the Ox to the Slaughter, or as a Fool to the Correction of the Stocks, till a Dart strike through his Liver.* Thus Self-Ease and his Troop fights against God's Israel.

(5thly) There is Self-Interest and his Troop, which God's Israel have to fight with. It is an Order which is given to the Camp of Israel, that they forsake all, Father and Mother, House and Land, Wife and Children, for his Sake and the Gospel's: *Hearken, O Daughter, and regard; forsake thy Father's House, and the People that are thine: Then shall the King greatly desire thy Beauty,* Psalm xli. *Sell all that thou hast,* is a Rule in Israel's Warfare; *he that warreth, entangleth not himself with the Things of this World.* Well, Self-Interest and his Troop fight against this Law, thus: "This is indeed an hard Saying, who can bear it? What! sell all? This is a very sorrowful War indeed, a very expensive War indeed: Says Self-Interest and his Troop, I would rather *save all,*

all, than *sell all* if I could. “ Do not meddle, says Self-Interest, with that Religion which will ruin you; that will bring you into so much Disgrace; which will bring so much Poverty upon you, and make you be pointed at by the World: Be wise, follow me, take my Advice; if you will be religious, let not your Religion be of this rigid Nature; rather be about that Rank of Religion which some Interest will arise from; let it be the present fashionable or the established Religion, which you are sure you can lose nothing by, in regard that the Religion of a Nation which King and Nobles are of, does not run the Risk that some Religions have done, which have ruined those who professed them as well as others. You may as well have the Loaves with your Religion, as have one without them, a poor, beggarly Religion, which no Body of Rank regards: And see that you do nothing in Religion that you propose not some Reward for; for if you give your Alms, see that you sound a Trumpet, either before you do it, or at the Time thereof, or thereafter, that you may be remarked as a renowned Christian, for Charity and other good Things. If you pray to God, see that you have the Praise of Men in your Eye: If you are engaged in any public Duty, seek great Things for yourself, great Esteem, great Applause, and the like. Thus this is another Enemy which *Israel* hath to fight with in the Progress of this Year.

(6thly) There is Self-Righteousness and his Troop, which the *Israel* of God hath to fight with
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in the Course of this Year. This Troop fights thus, as we find in the 25th Chapter of *Matthew*, *When saw we thee hungry, and gave thee not Meat? when saw we thee thirsty, and gave thee not Drink? when saw we thee sick, and in Prison, and we visited thee not?* It pleads much upon a negative Righteousness, Whose Sheep or Ox have I taken? whom have I injured? Thus, in a negative Way, it fights the Soul; in Flank and Rear, does it attack the Soul in this Form, Hast thou not kept the Commandments? Hast thou not been a dutiful Child in honouring thy Father and Mother? Hast thou not been an indulgent Husband, or an affectionate Spouse? Hast thou not been a strict Observer of the sacred Sabbath? yea, and punctual in all Duty, in all Ordinances, private and public, to God and to Man, more blameless than the Bulk of the World? yea, and if thou didst sin at such a Time and Way, canst thou not bless God that thou hast repented for those Sins with many sad Tears? though thou wast once a poor, ignorant, erring Soul, yet now thou knowest the Truth, and followest the Truth, thou hast been converted? Hast thou not got Faith, without which indeed none can be saved? Hast thou not got Repentance likewise? yea, hast thou not many good Frames? Love to God, to his People, to his Ordinances, and the like; therefore, says Self-Righteousness, thou shalt surely possess the Land. Thus he fights against God and the Soul with his Troop. For, my Beloved, though moral Righteousness is desirable and laudable, yet it
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is a Pity it should not keep its own Place : Tho' Faith and spiritual Graces are of the Blood-Royal of Heaven, let them not have the King's Place, for they are but Children, and it is unseemly to set them in the Chair of their Parent ; as it would be to place the Prince upon the Throne with the Father, and that Crown upon his Head which is the sole Prerogative of his Father. If you are clothed, O Christians ! with the Robe of Righteousness and Salvation, it is a Pity you should ever look on it without seeing the glorious Name wrote on it, *Jehovah-Tsidkenu*, the Lord our Righteousness ; or that you should be such Children, as to please yourselves more with the new Garment than with the Giver. But so it is, that Self-Righteousness and his Troop will turn even the best Things about the Believer to a bad Purpose.—Thus now, my Friends, these are some of the intestine Enemies which we have to battle with in the Progress of this Year. I might yet further proceed to shew, that there are other intestine Enemies, Enemies which *Israel* hath to fight with, and their Troops : For indeed there are Numbers of them within the Land ; for, *out of the Heart proceed evil Thoughts, Murders, Adulteries, Fornications, Thefts, false Witness, Blasphemy, and every evil Work* ; such as Captain Violence, Enmity, Abomination, Pride, Carnality, Hard-Heart, Distrust, Discontent, and the like. Now,

In the further Progress of this Year, the Enemies which attack and fight with the Lord's *Israel*, are, besides what have been described, such as these, 1st, Captain Vain-Heart, Proud-Heart, and Hard-Heart,

Heart, Enmity, Carnality, Distrust, and Discontent.

First, There is Vain-Heart. This Enemy *David* had a vast Detestation of, yet was overcome by it; for, says he, *how do I hate vain Thoughts! but love thy Law*: Yet it was this Enemy which led him that vain Dance in numbering the People, when he was so vain as to have the Vanity to think contrary to what he had at another Time declared, that the Horse was a vain Thing for Confidence, that vain is the Help of a Man. He was so vain as to forget the Hills, to which he says he will look; *I will look unto the Hills, from whence cometh my Help. My Help cometh from the Lord, who made Heaven and Earth.* This Enemy Vain-Heart, he is born within the House, City and Camp, he is a Native of the Land; and hence it is very hard to get rid of this Enemy, for wherever *Israel* goes, he will be there, he follows them as the Shadow does the Body: And though God's *Israel* hath had many a Battle with him, and baffled and beat him, yet he breaks in upon them again, before ever they are aware. It was this Enemy Vain-Heart which confounded the Tongues at *Babel*; he would have them go to build Castles in the Air, *Gen. xi. 4.* It was the same Enemy Vain-Heart, that did a world of Harm in the Camp of *Israel*, when he made them all mad, in order to have a new Governor, and a new God, *Exod. xxxii. 1.* *Up, make us Gods, which shall go before us to Egypt*: They sung and danced about an Idol, that their own vain Hearts had led them

to form. O! this Vain-Heart did a world of Execution, as you see in the Sequel of this Chapter, for no less than the Number of thirty Thousand were slain upon the account of that Step, which he had led them to. Thus God's *Israel* is hurt by this Enemy in all their Exercises, and in all the Parts of their Duty; for even in their military Exercise, Captain Vain-Heart hurts them in it, by blowing a Trumpet, how extremely well it was they performed it. If the Child of God hath been helped in any of its spiritual Exercises, to Enlargement of Heart, to Liberty of Soul, either in Prayer, Praising, Hearing, or Partaking of the Provisions of *Zion*; well, in steps this Enemy, and says, Well done, well done. As *Melancthon* says, this or such sort of an Enemy was ready to assault him. Or this Enemy Vain-Heart will puff the Person up with a vain Confidence, when he is about to undertake such a Duty, how well he shall do it, with what Spirit, while, when he is engaged, nothing hath been worse; yea, if he is upon any other Part of Duty, such as that of Watching against the Enemy, this Vain-Heart is ready to puff the Soul up with a Notion, that because he watched so and so, it is all owing to this, that his Enemy hath not in so long a Time obtained an Advantage over him; whereas, *if the Lord keep not the City, in vain do the Watchmen watch.*—O! what a Troop of vain Thoughts does Vain-Heart bring along with him; they are as busy as Bees at all Times in the Soul, both sleeping and waking; even sleeping, upon Reflection,

fection, you will find how busy this Vain-Heart hath been at Night, when you lie down to rest Nature; and as soon as you awake, if you reflect a little upon your nocturnal Frames, will you not find that Vain-Heart with his Troop hath been traversing all Night in your Souls? yea, could you pen down every Thought which you have in your Heart from Morning to Evening, and that even upon a Sabbath-Day, I doubt not but you would see that this Enemy hath had a great Part of your Thoughts. Thus vain Thoughts lodge within us: How long shall vain Thoughts lodge within you?

Secondly, There is Proud-Heart, another Enemy which *Israel* hath to war with of the intestine Kind. It is true, an honest, humble Mind bears very hard upon this Enemy; nay, sometimes Proud-Heart will make use of Humility's Weapons, and of Humility's Armour, of his Speech, and of his Dress, yea, and of his Drink and Diet, both in order to serve his own Ends. O! Mr Proud-Heart will speak with Humility's Lips; and yet, *latet anguis in herba*, the Snake lies in the Grass: Yea, as Humility is a great Foe to Proud-Heart, so also is Adversity; and yet for all that, Adversity hardly conquers Mr Proud-Heart, after he hath been ducking him in the Water and washing him; yet little more is done unto him, than though he had been washing a Blackamoor, still Proud-Heart will shew its Complexion; after Adversity hath been whipping him with a Rod, yet Proud-Heart is like a stubborn Boy at School,

who stomachs at the Strokes of his Schoolmaster; who is no sooner out of his Presence, than he begins to prance and play his old Tricks again; thus he contends both with the Word and with the Rod. Yea, Proud-Heart is very ready to improve even those very Gifts and Graces, which it hath got from the Lord, to the elating and lifting it up, as you will see by comparing the 15th Verse of the 16th Chapter of *Ezekiel's* Prophecy with some preceding Verses, *But thou didst trust in thine own Beauty, and playedst the Harlot, because of thy Renown, &c.* Even *Israel* is apt, through the Influence which Proud-Heart hath over them, to despise those who have more true Humility than they, saying, Stand by thyself, for I am holier than thou; whereas, when Humility gets a Blow at Captain Proud-Heart, he would knock him down, by saying, *What hast thou that thou hast not received? and if thou hast received it, wherefore dost thou glory as though thou receivedst it not? Who is he that makes thee to differ? He that thinketh he stands, let him take heed lest he fall.* O! it is much to have great Gifts without great Grace, and not be conquered by the proud Heart. — I cannot help thinking, that there was some Spice of Mr Proud-Heart in the Disciples, when they came with that Speech to our Lord: *Say they, even the very Devils are subject unto us;* to us indeed, forsooth: For tho' they had cast out Devils, at the same time the Devil of Pride enters their Hearts; therefore our Lord says unto them, *Rejoice not in this, that the Devils are subject unto you; but that*
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your Names are written in Heaven, Luke x. 20. While the Devil was cast out of Mens Bodies by their Means, he seems to have entered other Mens Souls. O! sad Enemy, whole Churches have been eat up as it were with this voracious Worm of Pride, that hath been at the Heart of all their Worship, as well as what it hath hurt indiscriminately. Say the Jews, *Are not we the Children of Abraham?* The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are these. O! Pride will value itself upon its very Privileges; whereas the more Grace that there is, and the more at least that Grace is in Exercise, the more Self-Abasement, the more Self-Loathing, the more the Soul says, I am nothing, Christ is all. O! would to God, that Pride were out of all the Churches of Christ this Day: And would to God, that all the Ministers and Members of the Church of Christ were more engaged in fighting against this intestine Enemy, which indeed is a very secret Enemy: It will come upon us with the very Clothes that we put upon our Backs, with the very Bread that we eat; it will creep in with the very Furniture of our Houses, and with our very Families which God hath given us, and with those very Friends which he hath afforded us in Life. Yea, this Enemy sometimes hath such great Possession, that you may see him looking out at our very Eyes, coming forth at our Mouths, yea, about our very Feet as we walk: Yea, so sadly have Churches been eat up with this Enemy, that they have been even proud of that which was their

Reproach; witness the Church of *Laodicea*, *I am rich, and increased with Goods, and stand in Need of nothing.* O! how hath he wounded some? as *Solomon* observes in his Time, that *Pride goeth before Destruction, and a haughty Spirit before a Fall.*

It is a remarkable Passage which the grave Author of *the Fulfilling of the Scripture*, records concerning Mr *Patrick Adamson*, a Preacher, once of great Repute in *Scotland*, but one whom Ambition and private Interest swayed more than the Interest of Christ; who, insinuating himself into the King's Favour, made it his Work to overturn the established Government and Discipline of the Church, until he got himself settled Archbishop of *St Andrews*, and Prelacy by his Means advanced; which the Church, from her Reformation from Popery, had disclaimed: Yea, in this Height of his Power and Grandeur, he turned an avowed Persecutor of his Brethren; at which Time he used to boast of three Things, which he said could not fail him, *his Riches, Learning, and the King's Favour.* But a little after, as was then known, he was by the righteous Judgment of God brought to this Pass, that his Parts did so wither and dry up, that, in seeking a Blessing on his Meat, he could scarce speak a few Words of Sense, though once admired for his Eloquence; as for his Riches, he was forced to get Charity from those Ministers whom he before persecuted; and as to the King's Favour, he

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was so abhorred by him, that, as he himself professed, when the Stroke of God brought him to some Sense of his Condition, he was sure the King did care more for the worst of his Dogs than for him. Thus in great Misery he died, cast off by the World, whose Favour he only sought.—Thus we see *Pride goeth before Destruction, and a haughty Spirit before a Fall.*



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SERMON

S E R M O N XIII.

The Marvels of the Month ABIB.

EXOD. xii. 2. and DEUT. xvi. 1.

This Month shall be unto you the Beginning of Months; it shall be the first Month of the Year to you. Observe the Month of Abib, and keep the Passover unto the Lord thy God; for in the Month of Abib the Lord thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by Night.

WE now proceed to point out more of those Enemies which the Church has to fight with in the Course of this Year. And,

Thirdly, Another intestine Enemy which the Israel of God hath to engage, is Captain Hard-Heart. When Christ speaks of this Enemy, Mark iii. 5. he does it with great Indignation; I scarce know a Place in all the New Testament, wherein Christ expresseth himself with more Indignation, than what he doth at this Enemy: It is said, *And when He had looked round about on them with Anger, being grieved for the Hardness of their Hearts.* And as
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Christ is thus grieved on account of **Hardness of Heart**, so when the Soul receives any mollifying Grace from him, it is in like manner grieved for the **Hardness of its Heart**. Sometimes **Hard-Heart** hath got such a Head, and is so confirmed in **Hardness**, that every thing done by means thereunto is to no Purpose, the Man's Heart is become like an Adamant in point of Obduration and **Hardness**; though it rain never so plentifully upon a Rock or Stone, yet still it runs off again: Indeed there is scarce any Stone so hard, but when a plentiful Rain or Dew falls, it will make the Surface of the Stone wet; yea, and possibly the Dew may stand upon it for some Time, but still it retains its natural **Hardness**. So is it as to a professing People; though God makes use of the Hammer of his Word to break them, yet still they are hard like a Stone, which, though broke into a thousand Parts, yet every Part will still retain its own proper **Hardness**: Though he beat them with divers and dreadful Judgments, yet they are hard; such as Sword and Famine, and the like: Though he rob them of Relatives, still **Mr Hard-Heart** is at Work; though the melodious Strains of the Gospel are sounded in their Ears, yet it does not soften their Hearts, still they are hard: These Things a little wet them, and make the Dew to lie upon them, as it does upon a hard Stone, yet still they find a **Hardness** like a Stone; and indeed it is a very hard Matter to master this **Hardness of Heart**. If a Man has a Stone in the Bladder, it is bad; if in the Kidnies, worse;

worse; but if in the Heart, still worse. Alas! there is a Stone in all our Hearts, as heavy as Lead, and as hard as Iron; yea, we were born with this Stone. Some Physicians say, that the Stone is hereditary, it may be propagated from the Parent unto the Children: This I am not so certain of; but sure I am, the Stone in our Hearts is hereditary, it is what hath been propagated from the Parents to the Children. The most eminent of God's Children have had to do with this Enemy Hard-Heart; and, O! how hath it overcome the best of them. *David* was for a long Time depressed by it; I think, for the Space of nine Months, he was in a very hardened Condition, Hard-Heart prevailed over him: But of all the Instances of Hard-Heart's prevailing, sure he did it egregiously with *Jonah*; for because the Lord had shewed Mercy to the poor *Ninevites*, Mr Proud-Heart and Mr Hard-Heart combined together against the poor Man, for it displeased *Jonah* exceedingly, he was very angry that God had spared poor Sinners. Was there ever the like of this in the World? A Minister sent unto a People, to preach Repentance and Reformation, and who had remarkable Success; for from the Court to the very animal Creatures, they are all in Sackcloth, and mourn greatly; yet the Prophet is displeased, yea, mad thereat. One would think this Spirit to be another than that of a good Minister; could we convert all *London*, should we be displeased at it! Yet here is a Minister mad that God was so merciful. *Dost thou*

thou well to be angry? Jonab, art thou now in a meet Mood to die? art thou in a brave Temper of Soul to enter Eternity with? dost thou do well to be angry, even unto Death? But, O! the Meekness, O! the Mercy of God; not only does he shew Mercy to *Nineveh*, but to the mad Prophet; for what other was he? the Stone at his Heart made him express himself in such an outrageous Manner as he did.

Fourthly, Another Enemy is Mr False-Heart. *The Heart is deceitful, and desperately wicked above all Things, who can know it?* So false is Man's Heart, that Man himself cannot know it. When once we know the Power and Strength of an Enemy, we have peculiar Advantages thereby; but such an Enemy this is, that we can never know, none know it but God. Man cannot know it, yea, Angels cannot know it, yea, nor Devils themselves cannot know it; for it is deceitful, and desperately wicked, above the Devil himself. O! how have the very greatest of God's Servants been deceived by a false Heart. The Instance of *Peter* is set up as a Beacon for all. I make no Question, when he said, *though all should deny thee, yet will not I*, that he spoke the very Language of his Heart, what he thought; but, alas, False-Heart deceived him, as it hath done many. How are some deceived so by it, as to lose their very Souls? and others the Peace and Comfort of their Souls? such was the young Man in the Gospel; such was *David*. The young Man in the Gospel came to Christ, desiring to be led to Heaven, (according to his then Thoughts)

Thoughts) he had some Religion, but not so much as to sell all that he had; this was like the Water of Jealousy unto him, which made his Thigh to rot; he went away sorrowful. Thus likewise *David's* false Heart had imposed upon him, when *Nathan*, by way of Parable, had told him of the Man that had stole his Neighbour's Ewe-Lamb; *David* is in a Rage, but he did not know that he was the Man. O! how many does False-Heart deceive, with only the Counterfeit of Grace? Five foolish Virgins that went out to meet the Bridegroom, I make no Doubt as much expecting to meet him, and make merry with him, as what the other five did; but False-Heart had deceived them, for they took their Lamps, but no Oil with them. O! my Brethren, this is an awful Truth, that many think they are going to Heaven, have not the least Doubt of it, yea, have the Appearance of it likewise, who nevertheless shall never enter there, more than what the five foolish Virgins did. O! my Beloved, hath not False-Heart deceived you, as what it did *Hazael*? 2 Kings viii. 13. upon whom the Prophet looks so stedfastly, that at last he weeps; and being asked by *Hazael*, why he did so? why, because thou shalt have Power, and wilt be perfidious (cried he) with thy Power, even to the ripping up of the Women with Child. Why, replied *Hazael*; Is thy Servant a Dog, that he should do thus? as if he had said, I scorn the Insinuation with Detestation: But, alas, he was such a Dog as to do it, according to the Prophet's Prediction.— Thus hath it been the Case with False-Heart; that

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that very Action which it seemed to look upon with Abhorrence, yet so deceitful hath it proved as to commit it. How commonly hath it been the Case, when some Calamity or Stroke hath been upon a People or Person, then, as the *Israelites*, they have been all Repentance, all Resolutions and Promises; but after they have recovered the Stroke, have they not been somewhat like a Mill, which, while the Water was kept on it, then it was kept going; but when the Water was taken off it, then it was done and stood still? *What shall I do unto thee, O Ephraim? what shall I do unto thee, O Judah? for your Goodness is as a Morning Cloud, and as the early Dew it goeth away.* Many have been worse after Affliction than before it, as Naturalists observe of Water, which, having been made boiling hot, when it cools again is colder than though it had never been hot. Mr False-Heart deals with us, as *Jael* did with *Sisera*, who said, *Come in, my Lord*; and shewed him a Dish of Milk, but hid the Nails which were to be fastened in his Head. It will present the Bait, but hide the Hook; the Profit and Pleasure it discovers, but the Pain and Perplexity it conceals: It will act the Part with the Soul, as what those did who sacrificed their Children to *Molech*; while they were in that wicked Act, Drums and Trumpets sounded, in order to silence the Shriekings of their Children, that they might not hear, and be moved with their dying Cries. So does False-Heart with the Conscience; while about any bad Act, it endeavours to drown it with Business,

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with Company, with Pleasure, and the like. What a terrible Instance have we of this in *Joseph's Brethren* ! who, after they had thrown him into a Pit, immediately *they sat down to eat Bread*, Gen. xxxvii. 25.

Fifthly, Another intestine Enemy that *Israel* hath to war with, in the Progress of this Year, is Enmity and his Troop : Hence, says the Apostle, *the carnal Mind is Enmity against God ; for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can it be.* This Captain Enmity absolutely kills and destroys those who never got any Victory over it ; Envy slays the silly One. The natural Man is at Enmity with God and with Christ in his Heart ; and is apt to say, as those Husbandmen did, when the Heir of the Vineyard appeared, This is the Heir, come, let us kill him. It is true, some of these Sort of Sinners will notwithstanding call Christ their sweet Saviour ; while yet their Conscience bear Witness, they never found so much Sweetness in him, as they have found in their own sweet Sins : He is no otherwise sweet unto them, but as they abuse his Death and Suffering, for the peaceable Possession of their Lust ; that they may live as they list in the World, and when they die, may be kept out of Hell. Alas, horrible Delusion ! is Christ sweet to such, whose Souls lothe that Christ who is Head over all Things to his Body the Church ? it is with such, as it was with the carnal Jews who delighted in him, while they mistook his Errand into the World, imagining that he would be a temporal Deliverer unto them ;
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but when he came, and sat as a Refiner and Purifier of Silver, and cast them out as reprobate Silver, who thought to have been no small Honour in the Kingdom of the Messiah; then his Doctrine galled their Consciences, and they never rested until they had their Hands imbrued in his Blood. Every natural Man is an Enemy to Christ in all his Offices, as he is a Prophet, Priest and King: When Christ is preached unto them, what Way is the Message received? the same Way that those who were invited to the Marriage-Supper received it? it is said, they made light of it; so does the Enmity of the Mind make light of the whole Revelation of God. Yea, Christ in his priestly Office is to this Enmity; as it is said, when Christ crucified was preached, *He was to the Jews a Stumbling-Block, and to the Greeks Foolishness.* And you may observe this same Spirit of Enmity breathes forth against his kingly Office; when it was said, *Shall I crucify your King? Away with him, away with him; we have no King but Cesar. They will not have this Man to reign over them.*—Well, but this Monster Enmity is mastered in measure, and overcome by God's *Israel*; though notwithstanding there is some of the broken Troops, some of the Stragglers, which belong to this Captain in the Camp of *Israel*, the old Spirit is still with them: *Paul* had a very great Conflict with this Enemy; for, says he, *Sin, taking Occasion by the Commandment, wrought in me all Manner of Concupiscence: For I was alive without the Law; but when the Commandment came,*
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Sin revived, and I died. That is, The Commandment which is itself holy, just and good, when it was presented unto him, he found that in himself, which he could scarce have credited before; it was as if a Mirror or Looking-Glass had been brought unto him, to shew those Spots and Blemishes he did not distinctly see before. For when the Commandment and Corruption are opposed, and set opposite to each other, they are like unto two different Colours compared; each makes the other appear more like their own proper and particular Colours. Thus the Commandment shews the Nature of Corruption, and Corruption the Nature of the Commandment; for Contraries, we say, use to set off and illustrate each other. Thus the Man who hath an envious Mind, may be reconciled unto God; but the Enmity of the Mind, as Enmity, can never be reconciled, for *the carnal Mind is Enmity against God; it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can it be.* An Enemy may be brought into a State of Subjection, but Enmity itself is very hard, and cannot be brought into such a State. Yea, do not the Children of God find this Enemy fighting against Christ, as he is a Prophet, Priest, and King? Why, I own this Enemy fights so secretly, it is very hard to see him, save when the Soul hath the strong Light of the Spirit; but so it is, that he fights against Christ in his Prophetical Office. Is there not a strong Inclination to follow the Counsels of Flesh and Blood, rather than that which Christ gives? Does he not reveal, as he is a Prophet unto the Church,

Church, Duty unto the Soul? and yet there is an Opposition in the Soul against it. Well, these are some of the Struggles that this invidious Troop teaze the Soul with. But again, do you not at Times find, that you would appear before God upon the Account of something of your own? do you never find that you want to clothe yourselves with a Web of your own Weaving, when you appear before the Lord? This then is owing to some of the Workings of this invidious Troop, that is still left in the Camp of *Israel*, which puts the Soul a going about to establish its own Righteousness; and herein it is, that the Enmity of the Mind is evident. It is true, you look for and expect Mercy and Forgiveness, no otherways than by the Blood and Righteousness of Christ: But let me ask you, do you never act in this Matter as the Papists do; who, as they have their Mediators with the Mediator, such as Saints, Angels, and the like, so have not you your Mediators with the Mediator; I mean, have you not your Prayers, your Tears, your Confessions, your Desires, and the like, which you think will have some Influence, even with the Mediator? If so, this is the Work of Captain Enmity against you. Again, do you never find, that there is something in you which cannot go in with that Petition, *Thy Will be done on Earth*, and with me, *as it is done this Day in Heaven*? Well, if so, Enmity is warring against Christ in his kingly Office.

Sixthly, Another intestine Enemy which wars with *Israel*, in the Progress of this Year, is Cap-

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tain Carnality: He is indeed a very deadly Enemy; for to be spiritually-minded is Life and Peace, but to be carnally-minded is Death. This Enemy hath indeed very great Influence over us, inasmuch as he hath so many Confederates, the carnal World every where to countenance him. Hence this Enemy meets with the Christian, and wars with him, while he is employed about his lawful Affairs in Life; while he is going about his Business, this Enemy will be very busy with him; while he is working at his Trade, Carnality will be at his Hand; while the Man is in his Shop, Carnality's Troops are some of the most common Customers; while the Man is at Market, Captain Carnality's Men are some of the great Merchants there: Yea, will he not even venture to come to Church with us, to go to our Closets with us? will he not intrude and thrust himself in upon our most retired Meditations? Has not Carnality carried you sometimes away captive, even when in the Church of God, that though the Minister hath been speaking, yet Carnality hath been speaking at the same Time into your Ear, that you cannot well tell whether or not you heard a Word of the whole Sermon, for not one Word of the Whole can you remember? For when God was sowing his Seed, Carnality was as busy in sowing of his; and his hath sprung up so, that it hath choked the Word of the Lord. Yea, hath not this Enemy attacked you, when upon your Knees in your Closets, that you thought you had been shut up from every body? but yet this Enemy hath got in, and been so busy with you,

you, when you should have been busy with God, that when you have got up from your Knees, you have scarce known what you have been about; though praying with your Lips, and by your Posture, yet your Thoughts, your Mind was carried away with Carnality; such a Care came hurrying in upon you, such a carnal Image, that indeed you have found him to be a very deadly Enemy. It was this Enemy which made *Israel* lust after the Flesh-Pots of *Egypt*. This Enemy's Voice in the Camp of *Israel* is this, *Who will shew us any Good?* any earthly Good: It is always, *Come, let us go after our Lovers, that give us our Corn, and our Oil, and our Wine.*

Seventhly, Another Enemy of the intestine Sort, that wars with God's *Israel* in the Progress of this Year, is Distrust, *Psalms lxxviii. 20.* This is the Enemy which was so hurtful to *Israel*. It is said, *they believed not in God, nor trusted in his Salvation; but they tempted God in their Heart, by asking Meat for their Lusts; yea, they spoke against God. They said, can God furnish a Table in the Wilderness? Behold, he smote the Rock, that the Waters gushed out, and the Streams overflowed. Can he give Bread also? can he provide Flesh for his People?* Unbelief always presents a Lion in the Way: How can these Things be? is the Language of Distrust. *Can he furnish a Table in the Wilderness? can he give Bread also? can he provide Flesh for his People?* Unbelief is like that furious God, which the Heathens paint blind, yea, a blind Enemy indeed; it is much that a blind Enemy

should be capable of doing the Execution which Unbelief doth : But it is somewhat like unto *Samson*, who destroyed more after he had lost his Eyes, than he did before. Thus it is, that this blind Enemy, Unbelief, makes great Destruction in the Camp of *Israel* ; for though he is a blind Enemy, yet he hath the Command of Troops ; the Troops follow him, and fight under his Banner. For why are Men proud ? why are their Hearts lifted up within them, as if they were rich, and increased with Goods, and stood in Need of nothing ? Why, the Reason is, because Unbelief will not let them believe the Verdict which the Spirit of God gives concerning them, that they are indeed wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked. Why are Men covetous ? why have they the World set in their Hearts ? but because they do not believe that Christ is better than the World and the Things of it. Why are Men uncharitable to the Poor ? but because they do not believe *what is given to the Poor is lent unto the Lord, and that he will pay them again*. Why are Men scared in a Way of Sin, crying, Peace, Peace ? but because Unbelief persuades them that there is no such Thing as Wrath and Destruction pursuing them from the Presence of the Lord. Yea, why is the Bible, the Book of Books, despised, many looking as little in it as they would do in one of their old Almanacks which is out of Date ? so the World is ready to account the Bible an old, antiquated Book, that is out of Date, an unpolite, unfashionable Book, not fit for fine Folks to be seen or have in their

their Houses. Why, what is the Reason of this? Is it not because of Unbelief? They do not believe it to be the Word of God, or that Excellency is to be found in it. Yea, why do People generally hear us, who are Ministers, preaching the everlasting Gospel with such wearying Hearts, and careless Ears? but because they do not believe that *we are Ambassadors of Christ, and that God doth beseech them by us in Christ's stead to be reconciled unto God.* Why do so many live in the Neglect of Prayer? why are they so formal and cold in it? but because they do not believe that God is the Hearer of Prayer. Why are there so many Hypocrites, contenting themselves with a Shew of Religion? but because they do not believe that God *searches the Heart, and tries the Reins.* Yea, my Brethren, in a word, whence comes that Flood of Profanity, which, like *Jordan*, hath overrun all Banks and Bounds in our Day, such as Cursing, Swearing, Drunkenness, Whoring, Cheating, Lying, Sabbath-Breaking, Theft, Murders, Robbery, Forgery, and the like? I say, whence have these Things broke in as a Deluge upon us, but because of Unbelief? Men do not believe that there is a God, or that they shall stand before his Tribunal, or answer for the Deeds done in the Body. The plain Language of the Heart of Unbelief is this, *The Lord doth not see, neither doth the God of Jacob regard.* Thus Unbelief makes a sad Slaughter even among the Wicked.— Again, it is greatly injurious to the Camp of *Israel*, when it prevails upon the Children of God;

as what we find it did with *Isaac*, and *Abraham* his Father, when, through Distrust, they denied their Wives: When *Abraham* called his Wife Sister, apprehending it would fare worse with him, if he owned her for his Wife, O! how did Distrust sling this Father of the Faithful at this Time! He who at one Time could believe, that notwithstanding of his Age and other improbable Circumstances, yet his Wife *Sarah* should bear a Son: Again, he who at another Time could believe, that though that Son was reduced to Ashes upon a Funeral Pile, yet God would raise up from the Ashes of his dead Son another *Isaac*; but behold, Distrust bears hard upon the good Man, and masters him. There was a little Taint of the same Enemy which had seized upon *Moses*, that meek Servant of the Lord, when he would have made that polite Apology, in order to wave his going to *Pharaoh*, that he was not eloquent, he was of a slow Speech, and the like: But the Lord reproves this Distrust of his, by putting the Question to him, *Who made Man's Mouth? or who made the Dumb, or the Deaf, or the Seeing, or the Blind? did not I? saith the Lord.* As much as if He had said, What manner of Apology is this, *Moses*, that thou makest me? If I see meet to send thee, I will give thee all the Furniture which is requisite to execute the Office and Work that I send thee upon: And what pitiful Excuse is it to pretend there is something the Matter with thy Mouth; no, that is not much, if thy Mind were right: For *who made Man's Mouth? the Deaf, the Dumb,*

the Seeing, or the Blind? did not I? saith the Lord. Jeremiab also had something of the same Turn, when the Lord gave him his Commission, Chap. i. 5—8. Before I formed thee in the Belly, I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the Womb, I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a Prophet unto the Nations. Then said I, Ah, Lord God, behold, I cannot speak, for I am a Child. But the Lord said unto me, Say not, I am a Child: For thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee; and whatsoever I command thee, thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their Faces; for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord. Yea, it is very evident how far this Enemy, Distrust, had got the Ascendant over the Disciples, when they told Christ to his Face, that they trusted it had been He that should have redeemed *Israel*.—But I have told you already, with respect to this Enemy, that he is a blind Enemy, as is plain in the Case of these Disciples; for it is said, *their Eyes were holden, that they knew him not.* Their unbelieving Discourse to Christ might be interpreted, as if they now distrusted that it was He who should redeem *Israel*. But then,

Eighthly, The last Enemy that I shall name, is that of Discontent. This was an Enemy which did disturb the Camp of *Israel*: *What, say they, is there nothing but this light Manna, this Portion, that is given by or with his Providence? Israel was for the Space of forty Years tempting God, murmuring and repining at the Way which God took with them.* Grace is at a very great Height, when

God's Way is peculiarly hard with the Soul ; and yet the Soul can say, with the Church in the *Lamentations*, *It is of the Lord's Mercies, that we are not consumed, because his Compassions fail not : We are yet before the Lord in the Land of the Living ; he hath punished us less than what we deserve : Or as Job said to his Wife, Shall we receive Good at the Hand of the Lord, and shall we not also receive Evil ?* But this Enemy, Discontent, is ready to express itself, as *Jonah* did, *I do well to be angry, even unto Death.* Have I not lost my Fame, and must I be content ? Have I not lost my Honour, and must I be content ? Have I not lost my Relations, my Children, and can I be content ? Yea, have I not very great and uncommon Difficulties in the World, while others prosper, and can I, must I be content ? No ; there is no Cause for it, would Discontent say to the Soul : Is not God denying you the Things which he is indulging others with ? Why, we see that this Enemy prevailed much upon the good Woman *Rachel*, when the Lord refused to give her Children, *Gen. xxx. 1, 2.* *And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no Children, Rachel envied her Sister ; and said unto Jacob, Give me Children, or else I die. And Jacob's Anger was kindled against Rachel ; and he said, Am I in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the Fruit of the Womb ?* Well, God gives her Children ; but then her First-born was *Benoni*, the Son of her Sorrow, namely, of her Death, for she never lived to enjoy him.—Thus, my Friends, Discontent is such an Enemy, that it is neither well

well when God gives, nor when he takes away; he either gives too much or too little; it is neither well in Sicknefs, nor as little in Health; neither when it is quite full, nor intirely fasting. It is like what the Mythologist fays of that Man, who besought *Jupiter* to have the Rule of the Weather in his own Estate: He had his Request; immediately he distributes Rain, and sends Sunshine around his several Fields, as he thought the Nature of the Soil would require: At the End of the Year, when he expected more than an ordinary Crop, his Harvest fell short of his Neighbours; upon which he desired *Jupiter* to take the Weather into his own Hand again, otherways he would be ruined. The Moral of this is plain.

Discontent would fain be his own Carver; but if we were, we should certainly cut our Fingers, whether it is that we desire to be so with respect unto Temporals, or with respect unto spiritual Things. Thus *Israel* was so much discontented with the Manna or Portion, which God in amazing Providence provided for them, that they were always murmuring, while the Lord heard them, and gave them the very Thing that they sought, till the Flesh came out of their Nostrils again; and thus, as the Psalmist expresses it, *He gave them their Desire, but sent Leanness into their Souls*. Thus it is with us in temporal Things; while discontented with the Portion which Heaven hath provided for us, we are hankering after this Thing and that Thing, this Place and that

that Place, this Condition or the other Condition; and if we get the Thing we want, it will be a Wonder if with it we get not Poverty of Soul. And if we change Conditions of Life, which we are discontented with, how often hath it been found, to the bitter Experience of many of God's dear Children, that though they get the Desire of their Heart, yet with it they got something that was like a Sword, which never departed from their House all their Days? Have they not got that which hath made them go with a bowed-down Head? have they not got a broken Arm, or a broken Leg or Hand, or something of that Nature? Thus they have got the Desire of their Hearts, but then Leanness hath been sent into their Souls. And as it is thus in temporal Things which we are discontented with; so, I dare say, it is so even in Spirituals. When we are discontented with what God hath done — with what Evidences God hath given of his Grace — when we rather deny that Grace and Favour which he hath given, than own it with thankful Hearts: This indeed looks like Humility; but I wish that there may not often be devilish Pride in such a Practice. *Peter* says, *Depart from me, for I am a sinful Man*: The very Reason why he needs Christ, he makes the Reason why he should depart from him. — But, my Brethren, see how this Enemy hurts us in Spirituals, as it did *Thomas*; why, he was not satisfied with what Evidences there had been given concerning Christ's Resurrection; and truly, in his Pet
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and Humour, nothing will please him, *Except I shall see in his Hands the Print of the Nails, and put my Finger into the Print of the Nails, and thrust my Hand into his Side, I will not believe.* Well, God indulged him with his Desire; but really in a Way that I think I should not like to have a Thing out of God's Hand: Why, he gives him the Thing he was seeking, but just in a Manner as sometimes we give a crying Child what it covets, Here, say we, take it; but with a Frown and a Blow it gets it. *Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; but blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.* Was not this like a dead Fly in the precious Box of Ointment? O! have you never found that Fruit, plucked from the Tree of Providence, before it was ripe, hath afterwards set your Teeth an Edge? hath it not proved like the Manna, when kept over Night, it stunk ere next Morning? Alas for it, that Discontent should convert the Christian to be like unto Cain: *But unto Cain, and to his Offering, he had not Respect; and Cain was very wroth, and his Countenance fell.* O! does not Discontent discharge such a Volley of Shot against you Christians, that you cannot keep up your Heads, neither open your Eyes, neither look around you with Comfort? O! fie! fie for Shame! that Christians should be thus; that you should be so dissatisfied with your Lodging and your Fare: Do you not know how, even you that fare worst of all, fare better than your God, your Jesus and Saviour

viour did, while he was in the World : *For*, says he, *the Foxes have Holes, and the Birds of the Air have Nests; but the Son of Man hath no where to lay his Head.* — O! if you fare better, Christians, dō dare Discontent fill your Mouths with Clamour, with indecent and passionate Complaints? *Jude* 16. *2 Kings* vi. 33. Why should your Hearts boil? *Psalms* xxxix. 3. Sometimes Discontent hath not only fet the Heart, but even the Hands at work, to bring about the worst of Purposes, *Matt.* v. 21, 22. as in the Case of *Ahab* against *Naboth*, *1 Kings* xxi. 4.



S E R M O N XIV.

The Marvels of the Month ABIB.

EXOD. xii. 2. *and* DEUT. xvi. 1.

This Month shall be unto you the Beginning of Months; it shall be the first Month of the Year to you. Observe the Month of Abib, and keep the Passover unto the Lord thy God; for in the Month of Abib the Lord thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by Night.

NOW, my Friends, we have essayed to describe unto you those Enemies which infest the March of God's *Israel* in the Progress of this Year: And, I think, every Soul that hath heard me upon this Part of the Subject, if they had their Eyes in any measure open, will be apt to cry, as *Jehoshaphat* did, 2 *Chron.* xx. when he heard that such a Multitude of mighty Enemies were in full March towards him, *viz.* the Children of *Ammon*, *Moab*, and others: Why, says he, *we have no Might against this great Company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do, but our Eyes are*
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upon thee. — Why then, I would observe two or three Things unto you here, by way of Improvement upon this Topic.

First, That the Number of your Enemies are many.

Secondly, That you have no Might against them.

Thirdly, They nonplus and puzzle you, neither know you what to do.

Fourthly, The Soul's Exercise in such a Case:
But our Eyes are upon thee.

First then, You see that the Number of your Enemies are great, inward and outward, before you and behind you, as the Psalmist speaks, *innumerable*, encompassing him about like Bees; they are past reckoning, they were more in Number than the Hairs of his Head. After the *Egyptians*, *Pharaoh* and his Host, are cut off; after God had sunk them like Lead in the deep Waters; after they had perished, that is, after those Sins which prevailed and reigned over the Soul before Conversion; great, gross, beastly, bold Sins, base Sins, Cursing, Swearing, Sabbath-breaking, Mocking at Religion and Holiness, Lying, Slandering, and the like: After these Enemies, these *Egyptians*, have been ruined, why, other Enemies have risen up in your Souls. Yea, those Enemies which did not stir, nor shew themselves in the Beginning of the Year; at the Time of your Conviction, they have broke in upon you with great Power and Spirit. I cannot help observing something worthy of your Notice upon this, with respect unto those
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who came against Judah in Jehoshaphat's Time : It is said in the 10th and 11th Verses of that Chapter, *And now behold, the Children of Ammon, and Moab, and Mount Seir, whom thou wouldest not let Israel invade, when they came out of the Land of Egypt, but they turned from them, and destroyed them not : Behold, I say, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy Possession, which thou hast given us to inherit.* Is not this verily and verbally true, O Christian ! that those Enemies, which did not molest you upon the Beginning of the Year, whom you did not invade, should soon after come upon you in the After-part of the Year with great Power, even the Children of *Ammon*, of *Moab*, and *Mount Seir* ? Why, who were those Enemies, you will see in *Deut. ii. 4.* they were some of the Allies of the Old Man ; hence they are said to be *your Brethren, the Children of Esau, which dwell in Seir.* O Soul ! these Enemies may be *still* for sovereign Ends, which God sees upon the Day of Conviction, about the Beginning of this Year ; but assure yourselves at the End of the Year, you will find them to be such as will make you cry out, *We have no Might against them, neither know we what to do,* because of this Company, because of these Children of *Esau*, who are your Brethren, that come up against you. Why, they come in order to cast you out of that Possession which the Lord hath given you to inherit.

The Second Lesson we may learn from these Things, which we have been upon, is this, namely,
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to see the Inability and Weakness of *Israel* to war with those Enemies; *we have no Might.* *Israel* and these Enemies are a very unequal Match; so unequal, that indeed it may be said, they have no Might against them; *i. e.* we are poor feeble Creatures; we are in ourselves as unlike to gain the Victory over them, as *Israel's* Army of Children are like to gain the Victory over an Army of *Anakims* and Giants. O! the poor Soul is ready to say, I have no Might against them in point of my very Mind; I have no Heart upon fighting with these Enemies, their Numbers are so many, their Power is so strong; instead of fighting with them, I am afraid of them, and flee before them: Yea, says the Soul, when I thought I had Strength to engage them, and have gone forth to fight with them, O! how have I been foil'd, how baffled! how have I fled before them, and returned with Shame? When I thought if all should desert me, yet I would never yield fighting, when, alas! I have been among the first which turned about like *Peter*, and have acted the most dastardly Part of all. O! says the Soul, such is my Case, such are those Enemies, that I have neither Heart nor Hand to go out against them; *we have no Might.*

Thirdly, We may again learn the Nonplus, which the Christian is put to in the Course of this Year, that *they know not what to do.* Were you never at this with it? and because of those Enemies which came up against you, that you was so puzzled, that you said you knew not what to do?

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Such was your Inability and Weakness, that you could do little or nothing; and such was your Darkness and Difficulty, that you knew not what to do, what Thing to do, or in what Manner to do it: You knew not what to do with this Enemy, and you knew not what to do with the other Enemy. The Sons of *Zeruiah* were too hard for you. You knew not what to do with *an evil present World, that hath been an Enemy unto you*: Yea, you knew not what to do with *Principalities and Powers, and spiritual Wickedness in high Places, and the Rulers of the Darkness of this World*. Yea, you knew not what to do with yourselves, your sinful selves, your Self-Ease, Self-Love, Interest, and the like: Yea, you knew not what to do with Captain Vain-Heart and his Troop, Proud-Heart and his Troop, False-Heart and his Troop, Hard-Heart and his Troop, or with Captain Vanity, Enmity, Carnality, and Discontent. O! say you, we know not what to do, is the Language of Souls when sorely beset with those Enemies.

Fourthly, We have what is *Israel's* Provision, Practice and Duty, even when they know not what to do, *to look up*; but, says *Jehoshaphat*, *our Eyes are upon thee*. Thus our Lord, when he was telling the Disciples what Wars, and Rumours of Wars, would come upon the World, so that it was enough to sadden any Heart to hear him speak in his Sermon as he did; *Well, but*, says he, *when you see these Things, look up*; one would have thought, they were such as would have made them look down, not look up; *for the Day of your Redemp-*

tion draweth nigh. The warmer and hotter the Battle grows, the sooner may you expect a decisive Stroke. — Therefore, my Brethren, in the Course of this Year, though your Enemies are many in Number, strong in Power, and you know not what to do; yet I would encourage you to *look up*, to act as *Jehoshaphat* and *Judab* did, *our Eyes are upon thee.* O! Faith will fetch Furniture from Heaven; it will bring the Redeemer down among those Enemies with a Vengeance. *The Day of Vengeance is in his Heart, and the Year of his Redeemed is come:* And, O! when God comes down into the Camp of his People, when there is the Shout of a King among them, when the Lord is among them, O! how does it strike Consternation into and upon all their Enemies? when his Terrors fall upon them; O! these Enemies are mortally wounded. When God observes the Camp of *Israel*, having their Eyes and Faith up to the coming of their Generalissimo, Christ; if *Israel's* Eyes are strongly set here, it will strike the Host of their Enemies with Dread: But especially when he comes into *Israel's* Camp, O! how are they all dismayed, they cannot bear to hear of his coming, but to behold it is very Death unto them. I remember in our late Troubles in the North, that the Enemies of those Lands, when they heard that the Duke of *Cumberland* was arrived in *Scotland*, they immediately threatened military Execution against any Man that should say, such a General is arrived, knowing that he was a Man who would not be bribed; his Terror, or rather

ther that of God, fell upon them. But what is this when the Camp of *Israel* hath their Eyes unto the Captain of their Salvation? His Coming, it is surprising to the Princes of Darkness to hear of it, his Coming is their very Death. And, O! when the Soul is helped to be employed this Way, we may assure you of Victory, in the Way of beginning to sing and praise, as you see in the 21st Verse of that Chapter. *And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set Ambushments against the Children of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, which were come against Judah, and they were smitten, Ver. 22.*

But another Thing that attends God's *Israel*, in the Progress of this Year, is *very dangerous Temptations*. When the Enemies of *Israel* cannot obtain the Victory by War and Fighting, they attempt to do it by Fraud and Flattery; witness the Instance with respect to *Balaam* King of *Moab*: When he saw the Victory which *Israel* had obtained over the *Amorites*, he thinks it neither advisable nor safe to risk a Battle with *Israel*, lest they should lick up all around them, as the Ox licketh up the Grass; and therefore a Council of War is held by *Israel*'s Enemies: They conclude to try a little of the black Art, by going to inquire of one, that we, in this more enlightened Age, have exploded as a *Non Ens*, both in Name and Thing, but with what Justice the unerring Oracles of God suggest, *Exod. xxii. 18. Gal. v. 20. &c. &c.* — Well, away they go to this wise Man, whose Name was *Balaam*, in order that he might come and try his Hand, what he could do by the Dint of

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the devilish and black Art; if he would come and curse them, possibly by raising some Commotion in the Air, or the like; and they promise, as a Premium, a Purse and Promotion; which hath made many a Man the King's Fool, as well as the Devil's Drudge. Hence, though God had forbid him to go, yet he gets up, and saddles his As, and sets forward; and when he gets within Sight of *Israel*, he begins his conjuring Art, and he is sadly baffled: He goes about from Place to Place, trying if he could make a better of it, but to no Purpose, for God is above the Devil; hence, he says, *there is no Incantment against Jacob, nor Divination against Israel*. But though we cannot hurt them, says *Balaam*, by Witchcraft; yet there is another Way that will effectually do it, which is natural, and I dare pledge my Honour and Profit upon it that it will answer, nay, take with the Temper of the *Israelites*, which I will teach you, and it is this: Dress up Numbers of the finest and fairest of your Women, the Daughters of *Moab*, and let them go a walking about the Skirts of the Camp of *Israel*; and they will get Numbers* to look at them, and very probably some of the Officers will go after them: But let your Women then walk off, and go to their Feasts and Sacrifices, suffering the Soldiers to go with them; and when they are full of Wine, and as full of Wick- edness, they will join in your Sacrifices, and so commit both spiritual and natural Fornication with you. And keep continuing at this Course for some Time, of pouring these *Moabitish Madams*,
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these *Female Fascinators*, into the Camp of *Israel*, till you make their Bodies as bad as *Israel's* Sons did the *Shechemites* with the circumcising Knife, and as depraved in their Morals as you yourselves are: And then the Business is done for them, as much as if I had cursed them with my Craft.—*Josephus*, in his *Antiquity of the Jews*, gives an Account of the Matter much to this Purpose; yea, the Thing is clear from Scripture, *Rev. ii. 14. But I have a few Things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the Doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a Stumbling-Block before the Children of Israel, to eat Things sacrificed unto Idols, and to commit Fornication.* Which we have an Account of in *Numb. xxv. 1—3. And Israel abode in Shittim, and the People began to commit Whoredom with the Daughters of Moab. And they called the People unto the Sacrifices of their Gods; and the People did eat, and bowed down unto their Gods. And Israel joined himself unto Baal-Peor, &c.* Thus the Temptations which attack *Israel*, are very deep and artfully laid by that experienced Tempter, who hath been employed for upwards of these four thousand Years in tempting, in going about continually, seeking whom he may devour; he is never at Rest, he is ever warring and disturbing God's *Israel*. Sometimes he manages his Temptations by way of open Violence, by Threats, as in the Time of Persecution, and the like; hence it is, that he is called the Great Red Dragon: He strives to storm the Castle of the Soul by downright Force; he throws the fiery Darts of Blas-

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phemy, suggesting base Thoughts of God, Thoughts which I cannot name; such as that of cursing him in the Mind, denying him in his Being, distrusting his Perfections, and the like. But then these Temptations are not only carried on in a way of Violence, but likewise in a way of Subtilty, as you have seen in the above Instance; hence he is called *the Old Serpent the Devil*, because *the Serpent was more subtil than any Beast of the Field*, and the falsest Beast in all the Field: Hence he is very observing with regard to the Temper and Constitution of those Persons whom he tempts; he studies to lay a Bait suitable to the Dispositions of those whom he seeks to ruin; as an experienced Husbandman knows what agrees and is fit for such and such a Soil and Piece of Ground, so the Tempter of Souls knows best what sort of Temptations will take with this and another different Person: It is his great Policy to have both the Wind and the Tide, coming and going together, to carry on his Temptations; the Way that the natural Tide of a Man's Temper goes, that Way the Tempter chooses to follow, and makes and causes the Wind of his Temptations to blow. He tempts the ambitious Man with a Crown, as he did proud *Absalom*; the covetous Man with Money, as *Achan*; he uncovers the *Babylonish* Garment, and the Wedge of Gold, and presently the covetous Man's Heart is gone after them: The sanguine Man he tempts to Passion, Anger, Lust, and the like, and hath proper Meat dressed up for all those, as we find he frequently did with *David*,

vid : The phlegmatic Man he tempts to Melancholy; that Gloom, which is constitutional upon the Mind, he strives to thicken the Cloud thereof, so as to render the Person both uncomfortable to himself, and to every body that is near him. Then as he takes this Way, so he studies the most proper Season : He knows the Truth of *Solomon's* Doctrine, that *every thing is beautiful in its Season*; and that which will take at one Time, will not take at another Time : He is like the Fisher, who casts in his Net, not when the Sun shines too clear, but when the Water is a little muddy, then is his Time; so the Tempter, he loves dearly to fish in muddy Waters. — Again, he watches the Time and Season, sometimes when the Soul hath been at some solemn Ordinance, and hath enjoyed something of God therein; or when the Soul hath got some Victory over an Enemy, then he is ready to rock it asleep, and to say to this Soul, Take thy Rest; come what will to *Israel's* Army, after they have obtained a Victory, they are apt to turn lazy; they lay aside their Arms; and thus when they least suspect an Attack, they are overcome; for when Men sleep, the Enemy sows his Tares. Then there is an Art in choosing his Instruments : The Devil is very desirous of Men of Parts and Ingenuity; hence he makes use of *Balaam* against *Israel*, one whom he thinks can do the Business with a good Grace; hence *Austin* told a learned, but an unsanctified Scholar, *Cupit abs te ornari Diabolus*, the Devil desires to be ornamented with such as thee. The Devil loves good Parts to

adorn his Cause with: He surveys the World, and wherever he finds more than ordinary Strength of Reason, Pregnancy of Parts, Depth of Learning, Elegance of Language, that is the Person the Devil hath his Eye upon to do his Business; and many such indeed hath he got: Hence, when the Duke of *Buckingham* undertook to plead the Cause of *Richard III.* the Citizens of *London* said, they never thought it had been possible for any Man to put so much bad Matter in such good Words and quaint Phrases. These are the Men that can almost mix their Poison with precious Truth, and wrap up their Poison in Leaves of Gold: Hence a great Writer observes of the primitive Heretics, that by the Power of Elegance, and the Sophistry of their Arguments, they were able to clothe horrible Blasphemy with such Rhetoric, as to allure many. But, my Brethren, these are like the Creature called an Hyena; which will counterfeit and feign a Man's Voice, particularly the Voice of a Shepherd, and so deceive and destroy the Sheep. These the Spirit of God in Scripture compares to Witches themselves, *Gal. iii. 1. O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you! τίς υμᾶς ἐβάρυνται.* — For by strange Feats, by the Mystery of Iniquity, the Bodies of Men have been hurt by Witches; and indeed the Souls of Men, by the Subtily of the Devil's Instruments, *Jannes* and *Jambres*, that we read of, performed such Things in the Sight of *Pharaoh* and the *Egyptians*, which confounded many, and hardened others, and made even the Miracles of *Moses* and *Aaron* to appear mean.

mean. — But another Class of Instruments, with which his Temptations are carried on, are such as near Relatives, he tempts by a sort of Proxy, as Courts marry young Princes and Princeſſes : Thus *Job's* Wife, the very Wife of his Boſom, or a Husband, may prove a ſad Snare to the Soul.— Again, in order to promote the Temptation, and render it ſucceſſful, he makes uſe of Perſons who have the Appearance of very great Piety : It is an odd Inſtance which we have to this Purpoſe, in *1 Kings* xiii. reſpecting the old Prophet ſeducing the young Prophet, and pretending the Word of the Lord for it, that the Angel of the Lord had ſpoke unto him, &c. The Temptation that he had reſiſted before, to the King, if he would give him half of his Houſe, he would not do the Thing that he deſires. But, alas ! how many poor Souls be wounded and hurt, even under Pretence of the moſt peculiar Piety ? for when the old Prophet ſpoke ſo and ſo unto him, he goes with him, and what is the Iſſue ? ſad ! *And when he was gone, a Lion met him by the Way, and ſlew him.* Yea, ſometimes Perſons of eminent Piety, who have not only an Appearance, but are real Poſſeſſors of the Thing which they appear to have, are employed, in order to render the Temptation more effectual ; even Poiſon itſelf ſeems pleaſant in a golden Cup. Thus you ſee an Apoſtle was made uſe of to tempt Chriſt, *Far be it from thee, Lord ; get thee behind me, Satan,* “ for thou ſavoureſt not the Things that be of God, but the Things that be of Men.” Who would have thought that ever
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the Tongue of an Apostle should have been employed for the Tempter? Certain it is, that the Devil's Ministers may be transformed into Angels of Light; but sad it is, that Christ's Ministers should ever move as Tempters in the Church. Thus in the Progress of this Year, you see *Israel* meet with very violent Temptations.

Again, in the Course of this Year, there are found to be very sad *Declensions* and *Provocations* in the Camp of *Israel*: It is no Sin to be tempted, otherwise the Son of God himself had been guilty of it; but the Sin consists in yielding to the Temptation. And, O! that we could find this not to have been *Israel's* Case in the Course of this Year, neither your Case, O Christian! Now the Times and Places of their Declension and Provocation are so many in the Progress of this Year, that I should not only weary you, but myself also, ere I got through them all; as at *Horeb*, at *Massah*, *Meribah*, *Tabera*, &c. with the Provocations and Declensions which they committed: Therefore we shall direct your Eyes to the compendious Narration of them in the 106th *Psalms*, from Ver. 6. *We have sinned with our Fathers: We have committed Iniquity, we have done wickedly. Our Fathers understood not thy Wonders in Egypt, they remembered not the Multitude of thy Mercies; but provoked him at the Sea, even at the Red-Sea. They soon forgot his Works; they waited not for his Counsel: But lusted exceedingly in the Wilderness, and tempted God in the Desert. They made a Calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten Image. Thus they*

they changed their Glory into the Similitude of an Ox that eateth Grass. They forgot God their Saviour. Yea, they despised the pleasant Land, they believed not his Word: But murmured in their Tents, and bearkened not unto the Voice of the Lord. They joined themselves also unto Baal-Peor, and ate the Sacrifices of the Dead: Thus they provoked him to Anger with their Inventions; but were mingled among the Heathen, and learned their Works. And they served their Idols; which were a Snare unto them. Yea, they sacrificed their Sons and their Daughters unto Devils; and shed innocent Blood, even the Blood of their Sons and of their Daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the Idols of Canaan; and the Land was polluted with Blood. Thus were they defiled with their own Works, and went a whoring with their own Inventions. Many Times did he deliver them; but they provoked him with their Counsel, and were brought low for their Iniquity.

Hence this brings me to the last Particular upon this Branch of Doctrine, as to what attended Israel in the Course of this Year, which was the Indignation and Chastisement of Heaven. They were promised thus much; *If his Children forsake my Law, and walk not in my Judgments; if they break my Statutes, and keep not my Commandments, then will I visit their Transgressions with the Rod, and their Iniquities with Stripes.* I do not remember the Time of Israel's Sinning, but it was followed with suffering their Declension with Correction; as in *Exod. xxxii. 27. Lev. xx. Num. xi. and xii. and xiv. 16. and xx. 11. and xxi. 25, 31.* Thus God will

will take Vengeance upon the Inventions of his People, though he give them their Souls for a Prey. And let me only add upon this Point; if you are a Child of God, and have provoked him, and declined from him, though not in the Manner which *Israel* hath done, yet you shall be chastised: But if you are not a Child of God, there will be Time enough to punish you in Hell to all Eternity; and therefore God may let you prosper in the World, thrive in your Substance with lean Souls, and never meddle with you, for it is all the Heaven you shall have. But you who are Children of God may be sure, that if God keeps the common Course with you, which he hath done with others, before you go out of the World, either upon your Souls or Bodies, upon your Substance, upon your Families, some Way or other, the Lord will punish you: Yea, possibly it may be in your very last Moments, that you may ride to Heaven in one of the Chariots of Hell; I mean, with the Devil roaring about you, while something like Hell is in your Souls. *Out of the Belly of Hell cried I, and thou heardest my Voice, Jonah ii. 2.*



S E R M O N

S E R M O N X V .

The Marvels of the Month ABIB.

EXOD. xii. 2. *and* DEUT. xvi. 1.

This Month shall be unto you the Beginning of Months; it shall be the first Month of the Year to you. Observe the Month of Abib, and keep the Passover unto the Lord thy God; for in the Month of Abib the Lord thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by Night.

WE come now to the Conclusion of this Year, upon the Close of which it is that the *Israel* of God pass over *Jordan*. The Waters of *Jordan* are divided, and make Way for their Passage into the Land of Rest and Promise; now the Manna ceases, and they eat of the old Corn of the Land; and every distinct Tribe takes up their Lot, which is measured out for them by infinite Wisdom. These and the like are the Things which shut up this Year, that we have been speaking of. The Gospel of them is this, namely, that the Soul, when it comes to *Jordan*, by which is understood
Death,

Death, it shall be led through it by the Direction of *Joshua*, that is, *Jesus*; as *Israel* was led through it, according to the Account which we have thereof in the 3d Chapter of *Joshua*. As soon as the Priests Feet touched the Brim of the Water, a Way was made for the March of *Israel* through: So when *Jesus*, the great High-Priest, shall lead his People into the Land of Promise, through *Jordan*, with the Ark of his Presence going before them, then they pass through *Jordan*, without so much as wetting their Feet in the Waters thereof, Death, which had often appeared at a Distance most dismal unto them, when they go through it, as *Israel*, when they went through *Jordan*, with the Waters standing up on Heaps near to them, without falling down upon them to hurt them. So is it with the *Israel* of God at Death; it is an unforged Enemy: They see it, as *Israel* did these Waters, but then they see it cannot hurt them; for, as the Apostle says, *Death is yours; Death is like Moses's Rod, that divided the Waters for the Passage of Israel: When Moses first saw the Rod, he was afraid of it; but when he observed the miraculous Effects of it, his Fears vanished.* So the Child of God, when he first looks upon Death, it is horrible unto him; but by and by, when he sees what it produces, how it brings him to his God, to the Land of Rest and Promise, he sees it can do him no real Hurt, no more than the Creature which hath lost its Sting: Though he may be laid under the Arrest of Death, yet he knows it is only like unto an Officer's arresting a Debtor, after
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the Debt is paid, hence he can rejoice over it. Death, I own, hath a pale Face; but when that pale Face is sprinkled with the Blood of Sprinkling, it is most delightfully ruddy; and the Soul can then receive it, and look upon it, as what *Jacob* did; when he saw the Waggon and Carriages come from *Egypt*, from his Son *Joseph*, to carry him thither, his Spirit revived. Why then should Death be so dismal unto us? for it is an Outlet to Sin and Sorrow, and an Inlet to Glory and Joy. Sin was the Midwife which brought Death into the World, and Death hath been the Sepulchre and Grave of this Midwife; for there is no such Thing as a total Delivery from Sin, till Death; it is a Leprosy that cannot be cured, until the House is taken down. You know that, under the Law, when the Leprosy appeared in a House, the Stones and Wood that were touched with it, were ordered by the Priests to be taken away, and others put in the room of them; but if again the Leprosy appeared, and it was a fretting Leprosy, then the whole House was ordered to come down. Thus is it there is a Leprosy upon every Man by Nature; in Conversion, these Stones that have the leprous Spots upon them are taken away, and others put in the Place thereof; but still the Leprosy frets thereafter, and nothing will remove it but the taking down of the whole House, which God doth at Death. Thus, in the Close of this Year, the *Israel* of God doth drop the Body of Death and Sin, which was wont to bear them down, and make them gone, as the Apostle speaks, *We that*
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are in the Body do grone, being burdened. The Word is borrowed from the Metaphor of a pregnant Woman near her Time, who grones with Pain, &c. In the End of this Year you shall be delivered from your Burden, from that Body of Death which hath been like a dead Corps, that you have carried upon your Back for many Years; that stinking dead Body, which hath sometimes been ready to strike you down with Stench, more vile than the putrified and dead Corps, which shall at the Close of this Year be taken away; that Body, which was like a Weight of Lead hanging at your Heels, that made you walk lamely along, and often stumble; that Body which was ready to bear you down, when you was arising upwards in Meditation, Faith, Joy, and the like, in the Close of this Year, the Believer goes to Bed, to rest him, till he awakes in the Morning of the Resurrection. The poor Man hath toiled himself all the Day; and perhaps his Day hath been fifty, sixty, or an hundred Years long; but at length he falls asleep in Jesus. It may be, like *Job*, wearisome Days and Nights were appointed unto him; he could not get Rest upon his Bed, his Relations could not ease nor comfort him: But in the Close of this Year he enters into Peace; he rests on his Bed, sleeps on a soft Pillow, sleeps in Jesus, lays his Head down on the warm Bosom of his Beloved; where he sleeps sound, without Disturbance from Hell or Earth, till that Voice comes from Heaven, *Awake and sing, ye that sleep in the Dust.*— In the Close of this Year it is, that the Believer
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is gathered unto his own People, unto the general Assembly and Church of the First-born. It is said of *Jacob*, when he died, *he drew up his Feet in his Bed, and was gathered unto his People*: A strange Expression! *Jacob*, when he died, was in the midst of his Children and Family, and a goodly Family he had about him of Children and Grandchildren; he was dying in Honour and Respect with the King of *Egypt*: One would think that he was therefore departing from his People; but it is called *a gathering unto his People*, because Death brought him to a far better Company, even the Spirits of just Men, and the general Assembly and Church of the First-born: All the Company above are First-born, because every one of them is an Heir, not one of them shall be flung out of their Inheritance. — Thus, in the Close of this Year, the Believer leaves the Wilderness of this World behind him, and bids it an Adieu for ever, and comes to his own Country, even *Canaan*; he is *no more a Pilgrim and Stranger*: He who hath been travelling up and down the Earth for three-score Years and ten, is now arrived in his Father's House, in the goodly Land which is his Father's, and which he had made over to him by the *Magna Charta* of Heaven. — Yea, in the Course of this Year, Believers conclude their Warfare which they have had for many Years, with the World, the Devil, and themselves; and they come off the Field like a victorious Conqueror, saying, *Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the Victory*. — Thus, in the Close of this Year, the *Is-*

rael of God end their Race which they had to run, and arrive at the Mark, and receive the Prize of the high Calling of God in Christ; and thus come to the End of their Faith and Hope, viz. the Salvation of their Souls, in the full and immediate Enjoyment of God for ever. Distance, Darkness, and Distraction, which were wont to intercept the Soul from seeing God, are done away upon the Close of this Year; everlasting Light irradiates the Soul; no more Clouds of Distraction to overcast the Sky through Eternity: Now the Lord is the Believer's everlasting Light, and his God his Glory; the Lord God and the Lamb are the Light of that Place. In a word, upon the Close of this Year, Believers rise up from the lower Table of Ordinances, Sabbaths, and the like, which they enjoy here with one another, and sit down at the higher Table in Heaven, with *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*; then do they begin to eat the old Corn of the Land, to drink the Fruit of the Vine new, in their Father's Kingdom. Our *Westminster Divines* very fully express this, in their Answer to that Question, What Benefit do Believers receive from Christ at Death? Answer, The Souls of Believers are at their Death made perfect in Holiness, and do immediately pass into Glory; and their Bodies being still united to Christ, do rest in their Graves until the Resurrection.—But, in the Close of this Year, Christ will translate the Seat of his Empire from the highest Heaven, to those Clouds which are above our Heads: *Behold, he comes with Clouds, and every Eye shall see him.* O! with what royal Splendor

Splendor shall he appear, when he descends from Heaven with a Shout, with the Voice of the Arch-Angel, and with the Trump of God ! When his august Throne will be surrounded with ten thousand Times ten thousand Millions. At the Close of this Year, the visible Frame is to be unhinged, and this Earth, which hath been the Theatre of much Sin, shall be burnt, 2 Pet. iii. 10, 11. For the Heavens shall pass away with a great Noise, and the Elements shall melt with fervent Heat, the Earth also, and the Works that are therein shall be burnt up. Seeing then that all these Things shall be dissolved, &c. — At the Close of this Year, God will send forth his Reapers to reap the Fields of the World ; I mean the holy Angels, who will reap so clean, that they will not leave one Soul that ever sprung of Adam behind them ; no, no, they will all be gathered together to the Tribunal. — At the Close of this Year, Death and the Grave are to render up the Prey which they have devoured ; the Sea shall give up its Dead, and the Earth shall give up its Dead. Thy Head, O Believer, is to be lifted up at this Time out of the Prison of the Grave : God will open his Cabinet, and bring forth his Jewels, in the View of Men and Angels, every one of them shining like the Sun, in the Kingdom of their Father, insomuch that Christ will be admired in his very Saints and Members ; when they are purged from the Dross of Sin and Mortality, they shall shine like the Brightness of the Firmament, and as the Stars for ever and ever : Our vile Bodies shall be made like unto his glorious Body. — At the

Close of this Year, *Mortality is to put on Immortality, and Death is to be swallowed up in Victory*; and all Christ's scattered Members, over Hills and Dales, here and there, in the Heart of the Earth, or in the Depths of the Sea, he shall gather to him.

We come now, after you have heard the Nature and Kind of this Year spoke to in its different Periods, to observe some other remarkable Occurrences which obtain in the Course of this Year. And,

First, There are very remarkable Revolutions in the Course of this Year, particularly with respect unto Government. There are Revolutions this Year we meet with, exemplified in the Case of *Israel*; for they were brought from under the most absolute, despotic Government, under the Tyrant of *Egypt*, *Pharaoh*, to be immediately under the divine Theocracy of Heaven: Yea, even in their civil Government there were Revolutions; sometimes it seems to be monarchical, and sometimes of republican Order, as under the Judges, and again when they would have a King after the Manner of the Nations. Well, there is a very remarkable Change of Government this Year, which begins upon the Month *Abib*, for then *Israel* is brought from under the Government of Satan and their own Lusts, which had a very commanding Power over them, *saying to one, Go, and he goeth; to another, Come, and he cometh*: This we may see clear from *Eph. ii. 2—6*. Now here is a very remarkable Change of the Ministry and Law, which *Israel*

rael was originally under : *For if any Man be in Christ, he is a new Creature ; old Things are done away, and all is become new.* — Why, before this Revolution of Government, you are to know that there is a very corrupt Ministry, which ruin both Soul and Body. There are Taxes laid upon *Israel*, which are very extravagant ; there is an expending of their Money, of their Strength, of their Lives and Fortunes, and all yet never a whit the better under this Government : You will see a List of the Names of the Members of this Ministry, in *Gal. v. 29.* *For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers Lusts and Pleasures, living in Malice and Envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the Kindness and Love of God our Saviour toward Man appeared ; not by Works of Righteousness, which we have done, but according to his Mercy he saved us, by the Washing of Regeneration, and Renewing of the Holy Ghost, Tit. iii. 3—5.* And what our Lord speaks of, *Out of the Heart proceeds evil Thoughts, Murders, Adulteries, Thefts, &c.* it must be confessed, that this is a very bad Government and Ministry. — Well then, one Thing remarkable in this Year, is the Revolution in Government, and the total Change of the Ministry : *Israel* is eased of being under the Government of the Devil, and his infernal, damnable Ministry ; they are brought under the Government of Christ, his Spirit and Law ; for *He takes away the Heart of Stone out of their Flesh, and he gives them Hearts of Flesh ; he writes his Laws in their Hearts, and his Truth in*

their inward Parts, that they may not depart from him. Now, instead of Pride, one of the prime Ministers of State reigning, he is dismissed and discarded, and Humility is put in his Place; instead of Malice and Envy, more of this Ministry reigning, Benevolence, Love and Affection, are put in their Place; instead of Hypocrisy and Guile, Truth and Uprightness are put in their Place; instead of Unbelief, Faith takes Place, as we find in the fore-quoted Text, *Gal. v. 22, 23. But the Fruit of the Spirit is Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance; against such there is no Law.* Thus there being a Revolution of Government in the Beginning of this Year, of course there are new Laws, Acts, Oaths, and the like. Why, there are the Oaths of Supremacy, Allegiance, and Abjuration, which are put to all true *Israelites* upon the Revolution of Government; and they chearfully take them, saying, as *Israel* did, *whatsoever the Lord says, that will we do.* First, there is the Oath of Supremacy, in which they solemnly declare, "That the new King they are come under, is the supreme Head over all Persons and Causes, Civil or Ecclesiastical, *So help me God.*" Again, there is the Oath of Allegiance, whereby they swear to be "true and loyal unto their Sovereign Lord the King, and to be good and faithful Subjects." And lastly, there is the Oath of Abjuration, whereby they swear, that "no Person whatsoever hath any manner of Right to the Throne;" and they renounce all Claim and Title which any pretend

to have to the Throne, but their rightful Sovereign Christ, by the Grace of God, King of their Hearts, and the Dominions thereunto belonging. Thus, my Friends, further upon this remarkable Change of Government, all malignant Men, who are disaffected to the Cause and Government; the true Friends of the Government mark them, and will not be Members of their Society; yea, they inform against them, and, as much as in them lies, endeavour to suppress them. Now this is the Revolution remarkable in the Beginning of this Year, with regard unto Government. But then, in the Close of this Year, there will be another remarkable Change of Government: Hence, agreeable to this is that Passage of Scripture, *1 Cor. xv. 24. Then cometh the End, when he shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all Rule, and all Authority, and Power. Ver. 28. And when all Things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all Things under him, that God may be all in all.* Now here we would have you to observe, that though Christ's mediatorial Government will be the very same with respect unto the Essence or Substance of it, yet it will be different as to the Manner of its Administration; for you know that the Administration of his Kingdom and Government, here upon Earth, is by the Ministry of the Word, the Dispensation of the Gospel, the Exercise of ecclesiastic Government and Discipline: But in Heaven, at the Close of this Year, there shall be remarkable Revolutions;

tions; for there will be no Use for any of these, for the Ministry of the Word, the Dispensation of the Ordinances, or of Church-Government, *Rev. xxi. 22. And I saw no Temple therein; for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the Temple of it.* When it is said, *he shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, by the Kingdom,* we are to understand the Subjects of the Kingdom; *Thy Kingdom come,* the whole mystical Body: Hence the Meaning is, Christ having completed the Salvation of his Church, will present or deliver all or every one of them to his Father, saying, Behold, here am I, *and the Children which God hath given me, Heb. ii. 13.* Again; when it is said, *he shall have put down all Rule, and all Authority, and all Power,* the Meaning is easy and natural, *viz.* that he shall have no Occasion to exercise his Power and Authority, Rule and Government, in such a Manner as he did before; why, because then there will be no more Elect to save, and no more Enemies to conquer, *Rev. xv, 8, 20.* Again, when it is said, *the Son also himself shall be subject to him that put all Things under him,* this, you know, if we own him God, can never be understood of his Deity, Person or Godhead, for, as such, it is said, *He thought it no Robbery to be equal with God:* Equal; two Things can never be equal, if there is a Difference, either in Quantity or Quality, in Weight, in Measure, or what not; it would have been wicked in the Son of God to have had such a Thought, that he was equal with God, in case the Thing was not really so. Therefore when it is said,

said, *the Son also himself will be subject to him that putteth all Things under him*; in the first place, this respects the human Nature of Christ: The human Nature, we all own, was, and is, and will be a Creature to all Eternity; and hence, as a Creature, it was and will be eternally subject to the Creator: This is a Salvo sufficient for the Text, against those black-mouthed Blasphemers, the *Arians*, who do not believe Christ to be the eternal God, co-equal, co-essential, and co-eternal with the Father. But further it is to be understood of the Church herself, which is the Body of Christ, and hence in Scripture is called by the Name of Christ, 1 Cor. xii. 12. *For as the Body is one, and hath many Members, and all the Members of that one Body, being many, are one Body; so also is Christ.* His Church is but one Body with him; and his Church, being a Creature, hath been subject to him, who putteth all Things under him. Lastly, when it is said, *God shall then be all in all*, the Meaning is, that the Glory of the Three-One God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, will be then most clearly displayed; and no more the seeing of those Persons *through a Glass darkly, but Face to Face*, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. 1 John iii. 2. Thus you see, my Friends, that this Year is remarkable for Revolutions.

Secondly, Another Occurrence, remarkable in the Course of this Year, is the preternatural Appearances of Heaven. Chronologers, both sacred and profane, have taken Notice of such remarkable Appearances in certain Years. Hence *Josephus*

plus tells us, " That before the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, the Crucifixion of Christ, and condemning the Gospel, a Comet appeared for the Space of a Year, like a flaming Sword, hanging over the City : That at the Passover at Midnight, a Light shone around the Altar, and continued for the Space of half a Year : That a Heifer being brought to the Temple, in order to be sacrificed, brought forth a Lamb : That the inward Gate of the Temple, which consisted of the most massy Brass, and which in common took twenty Men to open and shut it, being fastened with Locks and Bars, opened of its own accord : That one Evening, before the Sun was set, the Air appeared covered with an Army in Battle Array, as if they would have taken *Jerusalem* ; yea, and the Priest, going into the Temple at the Time of Pentecost, found the Temple to shake and tremble ; and a Voice was heard, Let us go to *Pella*, which was a small Village, some Distance from *Jerusalem*, whither the Christians retired before the Destruction of the City : Yea, that there was one *Jesus*, the Son of *Antonius*, who, eight Years before the War broke out, went frequently, calling, A Voice from the East, A Voice to *Jerusalem*, A Voice to the Temple, A Voice to the People ; and when the *Roman* Army came, another went about, still crying, Wo to *Jerusalem*, Wo to the Temple and People, and last cried, Wo is me ; upon which, a Stone thrown from an Engine immediately killed him."— Yea, I remember that Archbishop *Spotswood*, in his *History of the Church of Scotland*, says,

says, that, " In the Year 1550, there was a Comet, which appeared as a blazing Besom, all the Months of *November, December, and January*; portending what wreaking Calamities were about to come upon the Land: And when the Persecution waxed very hot, there was a burning Dragon, which appeared for a long Time, flying near the Earth, Night after Night, spuing Fire; so that the People were even afraid to sleep in their Beds, and obliged to watch their Houses, lest they should be set on Fire." — But now, more particularly to our Purpose, we say, in this Year which I have been formerly discoursing upon, there were very remarkable Appearances. What was *Moses's Rod*, which turned into a Serpent? and *Aaron's Rod*, which budded? What was the remarkable Appearance at the *Red-Sea*, its running as it were backward, and *Jordan's* forsaking its Course? What was that of the Manna? what was that of the Rock's running with Water, and following *Israel*? But still, above all, what was that Appearance which the *Hebrews* called the *Shekinah*, or the Divine Presence, manifested by the visible Cloud resting over the Ark and Mercy-Seat? This Cloud is spoken of, *Lev. xvi. 2.* *And the Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy Brother, that he come not at all times into the holy Place, within the Vail, before the Mercy-Seat, which is upon the Ark; that he die not: For I will appear in the Cloud upon the Mercy-Seat.* What I would observe from this Cloud of visible Glory, which appeared upon the Mercy-Seat, is this: That as it was a Token of the divine Presence,

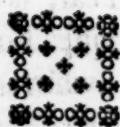
yea,

yea, not a mere Token, but the divine Presence itself, so that it was an immediate Pledge of the divine Pleasure : Hence it is remarkable, that the first Appearance of this godlike Phænomena, was after *Moses* had finished the Building of the Tabernacle, according to the Pattern which was shewn him upon the Mount of Manifestation ; upon the Day of the solemn Consecration thereof, the Cloud of the divine Presence appears. Witness what is wrote respecting this sacred Story, *Exod. xl. 34. Then a Cloud covered the Tent of the Congregation, and the Glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle.* Yea, we find that this visible Glory was translated from the Tabernacle to the Temple, and continued there until the Destruction thereof ; but after that it never appeared more.—Well, these Appearances are pregnant with Gospel-Fruits ; for there are certain solemn Occasions wherein it is almost visible, what do I say ? almost ! no, it is really visible, that God appears about his People ; that the Rock of the Church is not as the Rock of their Enemies, they themselves being Judges : Even a *Balaam* can pronounce them a happy People ; *How beautiful are thy Tents, O Jacob ! and thy Dwellings, O Israel ! A People saved of the Lord ; God is in the midst of them, and the Shout of a King is among them.*—Yea, did not the Council take Knowledge of *Peter* and *John*, when they saw their Boldness, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant Men, that they had been with Jesus.—God's *Israel* in those Lands, about a Century ago, had some such Appearance, some such

such *Shekinab*, or the divine Presence; this was visible in those Lands, when Ministers and People, high and low, were surrendering themselves to God, through the Influence of his divine Appearance: Then did God indeed create upon every Dwelling-Place of Mount *Zion* a Cloud by Day, and the shining of the flaming Fire by Night, and upon all the Glory; he was a Defence. But this divine *Shekinab* seems not now to appear: We may look into Churches, where such an Appearance was, and we shall see no such Appearance there now, but the very contrary. Yea, may we not look through *England*, into many Churches, where brave Men, burning and shining Lights have been? and there we shall find the Appearance of little but the black Marks of a barren Ministry. But what shall I say? if we look into Families, whose Fathers, like *Joshua*, said, *As for me and my House, we will serve the Lord*; in whose Dwellings was heard a delightful Melody, that the Lord's Right Hand did very valiantly; but now, scarce from one Year's End to another, shall we hear the Sound of Prayer or Praise. In a word, what shall I say? those very Persons who appeared all Fire for God and Religion, are now cold, as cold as a Winter's Day.— But then another Phænomena of the preternatural Sort, which was remarkable in the Course of this Year, was the holy Fire, which we find was both in the Tabernacle and in the Temple, which Fire came originally down from Heaven. It descended first upon the Altar in the Tabernacle, at the Consecration of *Aaron* and his Sons to the Priesthood,

Lev.

Lev. ix. 24. Afterwards it descended anew upon the Altar in the Temple of *Solomon*, at the Consecration of the Temple; and it was constantly fed and minded by the Priests Day and Night, without suffering it to go out; and with this Fire, all the Offerings were offered which were made by Fire: And for using other common Fire, called strange Fire, *Nadab* and *Abihu* were consumed, Fire came forth from the Lord and consumed them; but this Fire was extinguished when Things went to Destruction among them.—Well, such a sacred Appearance of Fire, as in the Temple of God, is in the Worship of his Saints; insomuch that it is sometimes as amazing to them, as it was to *Manaoh* and his Wife, when they saw the Appearance of Fire come upon the Offering, and the Angel ascend in the Smoke thereof.



SERMON XVI.

The Marvels of the Month ABIB.

EXOD. xii. 2. *and* DEUT. xvi. 1.

This Month shall be unto you the Beginning of Months; it shall be the first Month of the Year to you. Observe the Month of Abib, and keep the Passover unto the Lord thy God; for in the Month of Abib the Lord thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by Night.

THirdly, Another Thing remarkable in the Course of this Year, is the observable War which breaks out therein : For upon the Revolution of Government, which you have formerly heard spoken of, there is a Party disaffected, who find Fault with every Measure which this new Government and Ministry take ; the Reason is this, because of their Attachment unto the old : Just like they are to the *Jacobites* in these Lands ; who, because their dear Race of *Stuarts* are suppressed, they cannot be satisfied, but are still plotting, speaking, and fighting against the present

sent Government. Hence also it is, that there is a Set of Enemies, who dispute the Right which King Jesus hath to the Throne and Government of the Heart; they must needs plead, that he hath not an hereditary Right unto the Throne of the Heart, because there was another before he came, who possessed it and ruled there; which indeed is true, that he had not a Right of Possession, but still he had a Right of Title: And though his Enemies should fight against, and dispute this Right to Eternity, yet he will still make it good; for, 1st, He hath a natural Right to all Things, as he is God; *the Earth is the Lord's, and the Fulness thereof.* 2dly, He hath a mediatorial Right and Title, which consists in these Things: 1st, As Mediator, he hath a federal Right, *Psalms lxxxix. 24. I have made a Covenant with my Chosen: My Faithfulness and my Mercy shall be with him.* It is said, *Ver. 4. Thy Seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy Throne to all Generations.* 3dly, As Mediator, he hath a donative Right; *all Power in Heaven and Earth is given unto him: The Father loves the Son, and hath given all Things into his Hand.* 4thly, He hath an acquired Right by his own doing and dying; for he hath merited and obtained a Name above every Name, *that at the Name of Jesus every Knee might bow; for he is given to be Head over all Things to his Body, the Church.* And, 5thly, He hath a Right by Conquest, having destroyed Principalities and Powers, and overcome those that made War with him, *Rev. xii. 7. And there was War in Heaven, Michael*
and

and his Angels fought against the Dragon, and the Dragon fought and his Angels; and prevailed not, neither was their Place found any more in Heaven.

And the great Dragon was cast out, that old Serpent, and his Angels were cast out with him. 6thly,

I may say, He hath an elective Right, a Right by free Election and Choice; hence, in *Psal. cx. 3.*

Thy People shall be willing in the Day of thy Power.

Time was indeed, before the Beginning of this Year, that if it had been put to the Vote in this World, whether *Michael* or the Devil should have the Government; why, it would have surely gone

against Jesus: He would not have had a Man or Woman, of all *Adam's* Sons and Daughters, who

would have holden up the Hand for him; but they would have joined Issue with the Croud met

at his Crucifixion, crying with one Voice, *Away with him, away with him, we have no King but Cesar; we will not have this Man to reign over us.*

Well, but, my Brethren, in the Beginning of this Year, *Israel* change their Minds; and in case it

were put to the Vote, whether Christ or Satan should have the Seat of the Soul, not one Child of

God, who hath entered upon this Year, but would hold up the Hand for him, saying, "None but

Christ, none but Christ; we are thine, and upon thy Side, O thou Son of *Jesse*." Thus he hath an

elective Right. But, 7thly, I dare say, that which Men make so much Noise about, *viz.* indefeizable, hereditary Right, that Christ hath also to

the Throne, I think it is said of him, *Psal. lxxxix. 27.* *Also I will make him my First-born, higher than*

the Kings of the Earth. If he is the First-born of Heaven, it is against the Law of Primogeniture to deprive him of his Birthright. In *Col. i. 18.* He is called *the First-born from the Dead, that in all Things he might have the Preeminence:* And this Right and Title which Christ hath to the Throne and Government, we find confirmed and secured with a special Solemnity; it is confirmed by solemn Election, *Behold, my Servant whom I uphold, my Elect by solemn Vocation; I have called thee, I have given thee for a Covenant of the People, a Light to the Gentiles:* And by solemn Commission under the broad Seal of Heaven, *Him hath God the Father sealed,* John vi. 24. It is secured with the Solemnity of a Promise, that his large and great Dominions shall reach from Sea to Sea, from the River to the Ends of the Earth; yea, it is even confirmed unto him with the Solemnity of an Oath, *Psaln lxxxix. 35. Once have I sworn by my Holiness, that I will not lie unto David.* Thus, my Brethren, notwithstanding this Right and Title to the Throne and Government of the Soul, such are the malignant Enemies, that they invade the Throne, they conspire against the Throne, they fight against it, and Christ's Government therein: They are ever making Dissensions and Parties; yea, they bring Matters often to that woful Length of Anarchy and Confusion; yea, great civil Wars; City, Country, and Houses divided against themselves. Thus it is through the Course of this Year, so soon as ever the *Israel* of God enter upon it, they that Day draw the Sword, and from that Day
forward

forward they shall never have a Moment's Time to put it up again in the Scabbard; but Stroke upon Stroke, Battle upon Battle, Fears within, and Fighting without: *For we wrestle not against Flesh and Blood*, that which hath overcome many, but still more stubborn Enemies, *against Principalities, against Powers, against the Rulers of the Darknēss of this World, against spiritual Wickedness in high Places.* Which brings me to,

Fourthly, Another Occurrence obtaining in this Year; and that is the remarkable Conquest, the Victory which *Israel* obtains, as well as the remarkable Loss he sustains: For sometimes, in the Course of this Year, it fares with the Lord's spiritual *Israel*, as it did with the natural, when they were smitten before the Men of *Ai*, Josh. vii. that they are so much dismayed, that they are ready, with *Joshua*, to rent their Clothes, and to fall upon their Faces to the Ground, and to cry, O! Lord, what shall we say, when *Israel* turns their Back upon their Enemies? they are afraid of being environed and cut off from the Earth. Why, there are Times in this Year, in which they cannot sing triumphant Songs, because they are carried captive by their Enemies; therefore say they, O! *How shall we sing the Lord's Song?* they sit and weep by the River of *Babel*, they are so much worsted by their Enemies; the Ark sometimes falls into the Hands of Men, such as the *Philistines*; *Israel* is smitten, and *Eli* died with Surprise. So it is in the Course of this Year, *Israel* hath not at all Times the visible Presence of God with them;

the *Philistines* are upon them, and do with them as they did with *Samson*, they put out their Eyes, and put them in Prison, and make them to grind in Servitude and Oppression. Sometimes, in the Course of this Year, the Child of God is sadly and shamefully foil'd by his Foe, upon the account of his carnal Conformity to the Customs of the World; he is foil'd as *Aaron* was, when he fell in with the Humour of the People, in making a molten Image, whereby both he and they became naked in the Eyes of their Enemies. Sometimes, again in the Course of this Year, the Children of God are foil'd, as *Moses* was, by sudden Sallies of Passion and rash Anger; as the good Man was, when he smote the Rock in Rashness; or as the Prophet was, when he was angry because of the Gourd; when they are ready to quarrel with God, and accuse the Almighty. Sometimes again they are sadly foil'd by their foul and filthy Corruptions, as *Samson*, *Solomon*, and *David* were; and sometimes the Treachery of their Hearts foils them, and make them look as shameful as *Peter* did, when he denied his Lord. O! my Friends, we must tell you, these are some of the sad remarkable Things which happen in this Year; so remarkable are they, that if the Child of God should live to *Methuselah's* Years, he will retain a recent Remembrance of them, as *Peter* did of his Fall. Where there hath been any great Victory got, or a Battle fought, it hath been a Custom to erect a Monument in Remembrance thereof upon the Spot: So indeed there is a Monument erected upon

upon the Occasion of these remarkable Defeats they have had ; the Time and Place they remember with Grief and Sorrow. I apprehend that *Peter* never saw the High-Priest's Hall, after he denied his Lord, but his Heart bled within him ; as some tell us of him, that he never heard the Cock crow, but he cried. Thus *Israel* have their *Massab's* and their *Meribab's*, their mourning Places, where the Enemy got the Victory over them : Such a sinning Day, while they were in such a sinning Place, such a Day and in such a Place did they upon the Matter deny Christ ; when they saw a Thief, they consented with him, as poor *Origen* did, when he had his remarkable Defeat, which he lamented to his Death, and went down to the Grave in a Bed of Tears upon the account thereof. — Thus, my Brethren, if you never had any thing remarkable of this Nature, you are not dealt with in the common Way, which God, you see, hath done with his *Israel*. But I doubt not if you were to tell all your Heart, you could tell some sad Tales of what remarkable Losses you have had, how you have been foil'd and overcome by your Foe. But then again, as there are remarkable Losses, so there are remarkable Victories and Conquests thro' the Course of this Year : The Recital of *Israel's* Victories, we have the Spirit of God making in the 12th Chapter of *Joshua* throughout ; some of which Victories were so signal, that they could not but remember them, such as that obtained over the five Kings, in the 10th Chapter of *Joshua*, when the Sun stood still upon *Gibeon*, and the

Moon in the Valley of *Ajalon*. It is said in the 14th Verse, that *there was no Day like that, before it, or after it*. O! the Glory of that Day, as a Day of Conquest, was great; for five confederate Kings were taken, and *Israel* called to come and set their Feet upon their Necks, as a Token of further Victory; and those five Kings hanged up, upon five separate Trees, in the Sight of the Sun: At another Time their Horses were taken and houghed, and their Chariots burnt, that they might be of no further Use in War; and that *Israel* might have no Dependence or Trust upon them, therefore they are houghed and burnt. Thus in like manner, in the Course of this Year, there are remarkable Times and Enemies, which the Church and Children of God have got the Victory over: Sometimes they are like *Israel* of old, between *Migdol* and the *Red-Sea*; *Pharaoh* and his Host is behind them, the *Red-Sea* before them, and Mountains on each Hand of them; so that they are almost ready to despair of Deliverance and Victory; they are apt to think, that now if ever their Enemy will get such Advantage over them, as that they shall never recover. Well, then the Lord makes them to stand still and see his Salvation, which he will shew them that Day; for those Enemies which they have seen to Day, they shall see no more for ever; they see them all sinking and rolling in the *Red Sea*. O! how did *Moses* and *Israel* solemnize this Victory? *Exod. xv. 1. I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously, &c.* Again, the Child of God sometimes

times gets such a Victory over its Foe, as *Jacob* did, when he was about to meet his angry Brother *Esau*; when he was so greatly afraid and distressed, yet he got a Victory; when he has been left alone, such as hath caused him to call the Name of the Place *Peniel*, for he hath *seen God Face to Face*: Or when the Child of God hath been put to it, as *Abraham* was, to struggle between his Affections, and that which was the Command of God; nay, to be in the dark as to the Promise of God, when Providence was seeming to cut the Throat of it; yet what a signal Victory did he get over his Affection, over his Fears, and over all his anxious Cares, for he called the Name of the Place *Jehovah-jireh*. So, in like manner, when the poor Soul hath been in great Straits, between the Strugglings of its own Affections, and that which hath been called for Duty, and it hath got the Victory over those Affections; O! how sweet is it! how signal is such a Conquest! *David* often in his Experience records such signal Victories; that by his God helping him, he had leaped over a Wall, and broke through a Troop: *Paul* likewise, in his fore Conflict with the Body of Death, had Views of some signal Victory over it, when so thankful *through our Lord Jesus Christ*. Thus there are Seasons wherein the Soul can say, *I will not fear what Man can do; the Lord is my Shield, and exceeding great Reward*.

Fifthly, Another Occurrence is the remarkable Plots and Conspiracies, which have been laid against *Israel* in the Course of this Year. The

Annals of States abound with Instances of Conspiracies and Plots. We have had very dangerous ones laid against us in *Britain*. But the Conspiracy of *Catiline* himself never came up to the remarkable Conspiracies against the Church and People of God, as the Psalmist speaks, in *Psalms* lxxxiii. 3—6. *They have taken crafty Counsel against thy People, and consulted against thy hidden Ones. They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a Nation; that the Name of Israel may be no more in Remembrance. For they have consulted together with one Consent; they are confederate against thee. The Tabernacles of Edom, and the Ishmaelites; of Moab, and the Hagarenes, &c.* Time would here fail me, as it is said in another Case, to tell of all the Plots which have been used to hurt and ruin the *Israel* of God; all which have been notwithstanding abortive, for *the Gates of Hell shall never prevail against them*. You see what was formed by *Balak* King of *Moab*; yea, what a Scheme *Pharaoh* and his Ministers fall upon, to root out *Israel* from the Face of the Earth, which, if God had not frustrated, must have infallibly destroyed the *Hebrews*. Thus we find how *Israel* was imposed upon by the *Gibeonites*, in the 9th Chapter of *Joshua*; they did work wilily, and made as if they were Ambassadors; so they took *Israel* into some Connexion with them, which was very much to their Disadvantage, yea, against the Commandment of the Lord: But however, God makes that which is intended for Evil, to work for Good; they become

Hewers

Hewers of Wood, and Drawers of Water. Yea, another bright Instance of this is at hand, I think, in that Plot of the High-Priest to bribe one of the Apostles to betray Christ, that so they might bring him as a capital Malefactor to the Cross, was invented for the Ruin of the Church : But, as *Joseph* says with respect unto his Brethren, after he made himself known unto them, *ye meant it for Evil, but God meant it for Good, to preserve alive much Life, as you see this Day.* I have sometimes thought that the grand Council of Hell were divided in their Assembly about this Plot ; some were proposing Christ to be put to Death, and others not : If ever there was a Time wherein the Devil was divided against himself, it was upon this Occasion. In common the Council of Hell agree ; but they not seeing into the Counsel of God therein, as to the Coming and Death of Christ, hence some Instruments were for putting him to Death, some not. Yea, some think that it was the Devil stirred up *Pilate's* Wife, who sent to him, *to have nothing to do with that just Man ; whom the Princes of the World knew not ; for if they had known him, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory* — Many more Instances of this Kind I might bring out of the sacred Scriptures. Consider the Plots which have been hatched to ruin the whole Protestant Interest. — A most remarkable one to this Purpose, I would quote from the grave Author of *the Fulfilling of the Scriptures.* Says he, ‘ It is a remarkable Passage, which the worthy Mr *Forbes* sets down under his own Hand, whilst

whilst he was banished for the Truth; whose Words are these. “ In the Year 1607, being at *Ruan* in *France*, and meeting with Monsieur *Figureus*, that auncient and famous Divine, and then Pastor of the Reformed Church in that City, he had from him the following Relation: After the Close of the Council of *Trent*, in the Time of *Pius V.* there was a Consultation in *Italy*, by the Pope and Cardinals, for an utter Extirpation of the Reformed Churches in *Europe*; and to this End, every Prince of the *Romish* Religion had a certain Part designed, where this great Project should be put in Practice. The Death of *Pius V.* hindred a present Prosecuting of this Design; and his Successor, *Gregorius XIII.* did suffer it to ly ded, having no Heart that way, and so until that Time of *Clemens VIII.* it was not revived; but then this bloody Resolution was of new ratified by him, and his Cardinals, under their Hands and Seals. The only Difficulty was in this, to find a fit and trusty Person, whom they should make use of to the Princes of the *Romish* Religion, for engaging them to subscribe the said Ordinance, and set about the Execution thereof: At length a Gentleman of good Parts, near in Blood to the Cardinal *Baronius*, is choised, which to him was a Matter of much Grief and Sorrow, for, unknown to them, he was of the Reformed Religion; but this Grief in his Countenance and Carriage, put his Friends, who observed the same, to strange Thoughts; and so much the more, that he did expressly declare to some of these who asked thereanent, that what to them

them seemed a Cause of Rejoycing, was to him a just Occasion of Grief: Yet at last finding his Hazard, upon a bitter Challenge from the foresaid Cardinal, who had heard thereof, he judged it his Wisdome to dissemble, shewing him his Unsuitableness to so great an Employment, could not but be Ground of Trouble and Fear; and so was someway forced to engage, getting his Commissions, the Decree of the Conclave, with Letters to the foresaid Princes, sealed and subscribed. But, lo! whilst this poor Gentleman is on his Journey, having found Wayes to free himself of his Servants and other Company, his Spirit was in great Perplexity betwixt these two grievous Temptations, either to be Instrument of utter Ruin to the Truth and Churches of Christ, or forsake his Countrey, Inheritance, and all he had in the World; upon which he resolved to retire himself out of the high Way to an obscure Village, where for three Dayes he gave himself to Fasting and Prayer, for Direction and Resolution from the Lord; and after this had his Heart so strengthened against the Care of his worldly Estate, that he resolved to forsake all, and to reveal this bloody Conspiracy to the Churches of Christ, and cast himself on God's Hand for his future Estate: So that he turned his Face from *Spain*, and took Journey to *France*, and to *Paris*, where at that Time remained the Sister of *Henry* the IV. a religious Princeesse, afterwards Dutchesse of *Lorraine*, to whom the foresaid Monsieur *Figureus* was her Preacher; and unto him made his Adresse (though after divers Refusals of
Admission

Admission upon Suspicion) shewing him the whole Business, and delivered the sealed Decree, with his Letters of Commission for that Effect; and did likewise shew him (who was then astonished at such a wonderful Providence of God, in fostering some of his own Children in the midst of *Babylon*, and that to so comfortable an Use for his Churches Safety) that there were many others in *Italy*, yea, in *Rome* itself, of the Reformed Religion, who had their secret Meetings; and even *Gregory XIII.* before his Advancement to the Papacy, was throughly clear thereanent in his Judgement, whereof he gave him divers Evidences. This foresaid Relation did so affect Mr *Forbes*, that he shewed his marvellous Desire to see that Man, who had done so worthy and gracious a Work, for the Glory of God, and Good of his Church; and, by a Recommendation from Monsieur *Figureus*, he did afterwards go of set Purpose to that Place, taking the first Opportunity for *Heidelberg*, where this Gentleman was then retired for his further Security, and honourably entertained by that Prince; where he sheweth that he saw him, and from his own Mouth received the Assurance of this former Narration, to his great Satisfaction and Comfort." This is the very Summe which I have here set down and truly transcribed off the Principle, which I had beside me, both written and subscribed by Mr *Forbes* his own Hand. — Again, these Plots are carried against Christians, in respect of their natural Life, and in respect of their spiritual Life; there are remarkable Plots against both
the

the one and the other in the Course of this Year. We may say of the Agents, employed in carrying on those Plots, as *Paul* did of *Elymas* the Sorcerer, who wanted to turn away the Deputy from the Faith, *O! thou Child of the Devil, and Enemy of all Righteousness, how long wilt thou not cease to pervert the righteous Ways of God?* Such remarkable Plots there are against the Life, and spiritual Interest of God's *Israel*, in the Course of this Year, that the Spirit of God speaks of it as much, that they are not deceived; *if it were possible they would deceive the very Elect.* And these are sometimes against their natural Life, as we find was the Case with respect to *Abel*; the Devil and *Cain* had plotted together to kill the good Man, for no other Reason but because he was better than themselves. Yea, you may see what Plotting there is against the natural Life of *Joseph*, his Brethren combining together to kill him: *Behold, this Dreamer cometh, come, let us kill him, and see what will become of his Dreams.* If we are Favourites of our Father, we shall have Enemies, seeking and plotting against our natural as well as spiritual Life, as *David* had *Saul* seeking after his; *for the Wicked plotteth against the Just.* But much more is there Plotting against our spiritual Life, and the Interests thereof; herein the Vengeance of the Devil wreaks itself in bruising the Heels of God's *Israel*: Thus, with regard to particular spiritual Conspiracies against our spiritual Life and Interest, the Apostle speaks, *2 Cor. xi. 2. For I am jealous over you with a godly Jealousy, &c.*

Ver.

Ver. 3. *But I fear lest by any means as the Serpent beguiled Eve through his Subtilty, &c.* Sometimes there is a Plot formed, in order to blow up the *Israel* of God, Mines are sprung, Powder is laid, and a Match is brought; I mean, the Devil plots to blow up God's People with the Powder of Pride: You will meet with an Instance of this Kind in *Ezek. xvi. Thou trusted in thy Beauty, &c.* I own Grace itself cannot be corrupted; but our Corruptions are capable of making even corrupt Uses of our Gifts, our Graces, &c. O! how again can he blow a People so up, as to make them say, *Stand by, for we are holier than you?* or to say upon the Matter as the Jews did, *We have Abraham for our Father? the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are these.* It is a very dangerous Plot, if the Devil can bring a Person or Case to this Pass. But again, there is a Plotting, not only to blow up, but a Plotting to sink the Soul; and all answers the same End, if the Plotter can bring it about to sink the poor Soul with Dreads and Doubts, yea, sometimes with a kind of Despair; and hence he renders the Life of the Christian very uncomfortable, for though he may walk closely with God, yet at the same Time, by reason of such a Plot as this being carried on, he does not live comfortably. O! how does the Devil plot to sink the Soul, by Affliction, by Temptation, and the like? as the Psalmist speaks, *Psal. lxxix. 1, 2. Save me, O God, for the Waters are come in unto my Soul. I sink in deep Mire, where there is no standing; I am come into deep Waters, where the Floods overflow me.*

me. Christ and the Devil hath two different Designs in putting the Soul into the Waters of Affliction: When Christ bids the poor Soul come to him upon the Waters, as he did *Peter*, it is in order to try his Faith, and to let him see the Need of his Spirit, Grace, &c. but the Devil's Design is to drown *Peter*. So, poor Soul, is it the Case many Times with you in the Course of this Year; but this Plot the Lord delivers from, as the Psalmist speaks, *Psalm xl. 2. He brought me up also out of an horrible Pit, out of the miry Clay, and set my Feet upon a Rock, and established my Goings.* Again, as there is a Plot to blow up the *Israel* of God, and to sink them, so there is a Plot in order to delude and deceive them; and this is sometimes done by those Things which the Soul least suspects, as by Things that smile upon them, for Instance, Friends, Riches, Favour, and the like; but such Favour is often found to be *deceitful, and Beauty a vain Thing*: Hence *Ambrose* says, this Motto may be wrote upon the Door of the Creation, *Vanity of Vanities*; and may be wrote upon Places of public Exchange, &c. — I have read of some Serpents, when they cannot overtake a flying Passenger, they will fall a singing, and so inchant them. O! how sad is the Case with respect to the present Point, when the Devil hath not got his Ends in Affliction, what Grace we have got in Affliction, sometimes we lose in Prosperity by his means. O! the Smiles of the World are very agreeable to the Flesh; but they are like what I have seen called Quicksands, which appear good Ground upon the Surface, yea,
 plainer

plainer and pleasanter than the rest ; but the Person is scarce upon them, till I have seen him sink, and scarce get out again with his Life. So it is in the present Case, Friends, Riches, Favour, and the like, are very inviting ; but let me say, as the Apostle does to *Timothy*, 1st Epist. Ch. vi. 9. *But they that will be rich, fall into Temptation, and a Snare, and into many foolish and hurtful Lusts, &c.* God's Children, when they have been fed with common Pulse, as those were which we read of in the first Chapter of *Daniel*, they have looked fairer and fatter than those which were fed from a King's Table. — What, my Friends, is the Plot of Hell, in bringing some of the Children of God to an high Mountain, and there letting them see the Kingdoms of this World, and the Glory of them, but that they may fall down and worship the God of this World? Thus this Year is remarkable for Plots.



SERMON

S E R M O N XVII.

The Marvels of the Month ABIB.

EXOD. xii. 2. and DEUT. xvi. 1.

This Month shall be unto you the Beginning of Months; it shall be the first Month of the Year to you. Observe the Month of Abib, and keep the Passover unto the Lord thy God; for in the Month of Abib the Lord thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by Night.

Sixthly, In the Course of this Year, another remarkable Occurrence is a very remarkable Peace, which is ratified and concluded; and, because of the Author and Restorer of it, it is called *the Peace of God*, Phil. iv. 7. *The Peace of God, which passeth all Understanding, keep your Hearts and Minds in the Knowledge and Love of God, &c.* Before this Year, there were Hostilities carried on against Heaven; for Heaven had declared War with Earth, and Earth had declared War with Heaven; Heaven had declared that there is no Peace to the Wicked, Isa. lvii. 21. *There is no*

Peace, saith my God, to the Wicked. Again, Earth hath declared, that it would not have this Man to reign over it; they had no Portion in David, nor Inheritance in the Son of Jesse; up, every Man to his Tent: Consequently there was Fighting and Warring with God by the Earth, and a Striving with the Sinner by Heaven; Heaven strives by repeated Rebukes, by Judgments, by Strokes upon the Body, Mind, and Conscience; but the Sinner is like *Ephraim*, as a Bullock unaccustomed to the Yoke; he is like to a mad Bull in a Net, which tears and rends with very great Rage and Fury. Yea, the Whole of a natural Man's Life is a Fighting with God: For Sinners have cursed God in their Hearts, they have blasphemed him in their Lives; there is not one Law, one Order or Command of Heaven, but they have troden under Foot. The Sinner makes a most obstinate Resistance against God, he seems to be quite inflexible and almost unconquerable; for while he hath so much as Breath, he breathes forth that Breath against God; while he hath any Strength remaining, that he exercises against Heaven: Hence Heaven, before he makes a Conquest of the Soul, he is said to kill and slay the Soul, and the Soul is said to die, as in *Eph. ii. 16. 2 Cor. iii. 6. For the Letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth Life.* Thus in virtue of this Slaying and Killing, the Soul says it is dead: For, says the Apostle, *I was alive without the Law; but when the Commandment came, Sin revived, and I died:* No more could he do as he had done, he saw it was vain for him to kick against

gainst Heaven; and hence he is made willing to be any thing that God would have him, to lay down his Weapons which he had employed in fighting against Heaven, and to employ them in fighting for Heaven. Thus, in this Year, there is the Proclamation of Peace, a very remarkable Peace indeed; hence, as I already said, it is called *the Peace of God*, because it is a Peace *which passeth all Understanding*: There is no Peace among any of the Nations of the World like it; for when Peace hath been concluded and ratified between one Nation and another, which seemed to be very well sealed, yet in Process of Time there is a Rupture, and they go to War again, and are as much and greater Enemies to one another than ever they were. In this Peace, *which passeth all Understanding*, it is impossible that this can be the Case, because there is an Oath made by the Great God, that he will never break it, *Isa. liv. 9, 10. For this is as the Waters of Noah unto me: For as I have sworn that the Waters of Noah should no more go over the Earth; so have I sworn, that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the Mountains shall depart, and the Hills be removed; but my Kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the Covenant of my Peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath Mercy on thee.* It is now upwards of four thousand Years since what the Spirit of God calls the Waters of Noah went over the Earth, and we have never heard of such a Flood of Water, neither shall we ever hear of such a one: But tho' *the Mountains depart, and the Hills be removed,* to

look at the lofty Mountains and Hills, one would think they were for ever, hence indeed they are called *everlasting Mountains*, but they may and shall be removed; but *the Covenant of my Peace shall not be removed*. O! strange Peace indeed, which is like the Author of it, the God of Peace; for as none can know him, none can thoroughly understand the Nature of this Peace, it *passeth all Understanding*. Thus much you see then is plain, that in this Year there is a Peace in *Israel*, eternal Peace; and though the Soul was brought into this Peace in the Way and Manner you have heard, yet it was not a poor Peace for it, but a Peace with which the greatest Plenty followed: During the Day of the Soul's warring against Heaven, it was sunk in Debt and Dirt; and God knows, all that the Soul in a natural State trades for, is nothing but perishable Goods and Commodities; it feeds upon Hogs and Dogs Meat, and upon that which was worse: But upon this Peace being clapt up, O! a fatted Calf is fed upon, and there is Fulness in the Soul; now the Soul flourishes in Opulence and Riches, in Gold and Silver, and in every rich Thing. But what shall I say? in virtue of this Peace, the Soul partakes of the Peace, which all the Riches, all the Honours and Dignities of the World cannot give; for indeed it is a Peace, not as the World gives, that is given to it: A Man may very possibly be at Peace with his Enemies, here he may be at Peace with his Friends, but yet have very little Peace of Conscience; I own, for my part, it is a Mystery to me how it is that the wicked

wicked Man hath Peace of Conscience, such a Mystery as I can account for no other way than that he has such a Conscience, as the Apostle speaks of, *seared with a hot Iron*; for the Conscience is like the Eyes of our Bodies, a very small Mote troubling it will cause it to weep: But the Person, the Soul, who hath entered upon this Peace, hath that in his Conscience which nothing in this World can give; you may give a Man Riches, you may give him Friends, yea, you may give him a false Cure of Conscience which passes; but you can never give that Person true Peace of Conscience, till this remarkable Peace, we are speaking of, is proclaimed, ratified and confirmed; for in it the Person is at Peace with God, with Christ, the Holy Ghost, &c.

Seventhly, The remaining remarkable Things, which we would mention, are remarkable Winds and Earthquakes, Diseases, Births and Deaths. With regard unto remarkable Winds, we find this obtaining in the Course of *Israel's* Progress from *Egypt* to *Canaan*; it is said, *thou didst blow with thy Wind; the Lord caused the Sea to go back with a strong East Wind*: Thus also in the 37th Chapter of *Ezekiel*, we read of a very remarkable Wind, which blew in such a Manner as to bring Life into dead Bones. — Well, my Friends, let us apply this to our Purpose, as agreeing with the Experience of Christians in the Course of their Pilgrimage. 1st, There is one of the most remarkable Winds blows upon them this Year that ever was heard of; it is of the same Nature with that Wind,

which we read of in *Acts* ii. 2. *a rushing mighty Wind*. This Wind is nothing else but the Breath of the Spirit of God blowing upon a dead Creature, in order to his quickning; and indeed it hath this Effect, it is a quickning Wind, as well as it is a clearing Wind: *The Wind bloweth where it listeth; thou hearest the Sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit*. It is a Wind which gives Life and Breath; when this Wind blows from the South, the southern Gales of quickning Influences, it is a reviving Wind; when it blows from the North, it is a clearing Wind, it tends to clear the Head of Corruption which grows in the Heart: Hence the Church says, *Cant. iv. 16. Awake, O North Wind, and come thou South, blow upon my Garden, that the Spices thereof may flow out*. The same Wind which serves to save alive the *Israel* of God, serves to slay the *Egyptians*; so that the same remarkable Wind, which saves and preserves our Graces, slays and kills our Sins and Corruptions: This remarkable Wind separates the Chaff from the Wheat, Truth from Error, Grace from every Counterfeit of it; yea, it blows down every Building which hath not Christ for its Foundation: *The Wind bloweth against that House, and it falleth, and great is the Fall thereof*. — But again, in the Course of this Year, there are windy Judgments; for Judgments in Scripture are expressed by Wind, as in *Isa. xxvii. 8. He stayeth his rough Wind in the Day of his East-Wind; He assuageth the Fury of the Storms, and mitigates the Severity*

Severity of his Judgments. Thus many such Winds did there blow upon *Israel* in the Course of this Year, strange and remarkable Judgments: The Lord makes Flesh to come forth at their Nostrials; sometimes he makes the Earth to open, and swallow up Multitudes; sometimes he causes every Man to slay his Neighbour, &c. Well, in like manner, in the Course of this Year, God sends very remarkable Winds of Judgments, such as the Saints may read their Sin written upon the Forehead of them: Sometimes for Abuse of Plenty, he hath sent Penury; for Prodigality, he hath sent Poverty; for Unthankfulness, he hath taken away even the Blessings which he bestowed, and sent Judgments in the Place of them. — But again, in the Course of this Year, there is the raging Wind of Error blows; for the Apostle compares vain and inconstant Opinions and Doctrines to Wind, *Eph. iv. 14. Be no more Children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every Wind of Doctrine, &c.* As the Wind is a very subtil Body, so false Doctrines are the same; they are subtil, but without any Substance of Truth: Sometimes the Wind of Error is very thin spun, that it is hard to distinguish it; but still it is no better than the Spider's Web, it is made with a Design to catch simple Creatures who are whisking about, and they fly or run into it before they know what they are doing; it is with Difficulty that they get out of it again, and if they get out, possibly they carry some of the Spider's Web along with them. Again, as the Wind is uncertain, now blowing from one

Quarter, and by and by from another, now loud, and by and by silent; so is the Wind of Error; now it makes a great Sound, by and by it vanishes and is silent: The Wind, you know, easily carries about light Bodies, and Bodies which are not fixed; it blows about here and there Stubble, Chaff, and the like, whereas a House well-founded stands the Rain and the Wind; *the Floods come, the Winds blow, but that House falls not*: So the Doctrines of false Teachers carry aside unstable Persons; but they who are rooted in Christ, shall never be moved.

Eighthly, In the Course of this Year there are very remarkable Earthquakes: The Psalmist, in the 114th Psalm, observes this to have been the Case, and *Habakkuk*, Chap. iii. Well, my Friends, in the Christian's Experience, there are such Earthquakes: There is a Commotion among the Mountains, that they skip like Rams, and the little Hills like Lambs; the Reason is, at the Presence of the Lord, the God of the whole Earth.— Well, in the Course of this Year, there is an Earthquake, whereby the dirty Mountain of Carnality is shaken, the black Mountain of Distress is shaken, the lofty Mountain of Pride is shaken, and the fiery Mountains of Envy, Malice, and the like, are shaken; the lofty Mountain of Mens Pride is brought down and shaken; the Loftiness of Man is brought down, and his Haughtiness, *I/a. ii. 17.* Again, the burning Mountains of Mens Lusts are shaken and brought down in this Year: Thus there are remarkable Earthquakes in this Year; sometimes it

is said, *Mens Hearts fail them for Fear*: There is Trembling and Fear in the Soul upon various Accounts; Fears there are within, and Fightings without; such Quakings are there in the Soul, in the Course of this Year, that it can scarce stand, but falls down through Fear; *I am distracted*, says Heman, *while I suffer thy Terrors*. The Christian is ready at Times to become like the Keepers, who were set to watch Christ; and it is said, *there was a great Earthquake, and for Fear of him the Keepers did shake, and became as dead Men*. Job found something of this in his Case, when he says, *the Arrows of the Almighty are within me*, &c. And the Apostle hints at this, *knowing the Terrors of the Lord, we persuade Men*.

The ninth observable Occurrence, which obtains in this Period, is the remarkable Births, such as we read of, in Gal. v. 22, 23. *But the Fruit of the Spirit is Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance*. This is one of the Marvels which takes Place in the Month Abib, which even amazeth Masters in Israel, and makes them say, *How can these Things be? how can a Man be born when he is old? can he enter the second Time into his Mother's Womb, and be born: Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again*, John iii. 4, 7. It is seldom we hear of a Woman bringing forth three or four Children at a Birth; but behold, in this Month Abib, which is the Beginning of Months, no less than nine or ten beautiful Babes are born, and baptized by the following Names, *Love, Joy, Peace, Long suffer-*
ing,

ing, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance. The marvellous Births in this Month are not only various, but curious, both as to their Number and Nature; for some of these Children are born as big as Men, at their full Stature, such as the Children of *Love and Joy*, Jer. ii. 2, 3. and Hosea ii. 15.

Tenthly, Another observable Occurrence which takes Place in the Course of this Year, is the remarkable Diseases, both endemical and epidemical; such as Lethargies, Leprosies, Fevers of various Species, Consumptions, and the like, Deut. xxviii. 59—61. *Then the Lord will make thy Plagues wonderful, and the Plagues of thy Seed, even great Plagues, and of long Continuance; and sore Sickneses, and of long Continuance. Moreover, he will bring upon thee all the Diseases of Egypt, which thou wast afraid of; and they shall cleave unto thee. Also every Sickness, and every Plague which is not written in the Book of this Law, them will the Lord bring upon thee, until thou be destroyed.*

Eleventhly, It is remarkable for Deaths. 1st, The Death of Sin through the whole Course of this Year. Sin is upon the dying Order, at the Close of it is its Funeral; for nothing that defiles or makes a Lie, can enter within the Gates of the new Jerusalem: Even after they have come out of Egypt, as you have heard, there is strange sinning Days, sinning in Heart, in Life, and the like; but at the Close of it, they shall be like the Angels in Heaven; *they shall be like him, for they shall see him as he is.* What is written in Psalm xy. will

will be literally true: For they shall not only have Dominion over Sin; they shall not only be delivered from the Being, but from the very Inbeing of it. 2dly, King Self dies in this Year. O! how much of sacrificing to ourselves, how much is there of Self in every thing we do, in our Eating, in our Drinking, in our Working, and in every thing we do, as Mr *Shephard* speaks, Self makes a Man pray, makes a Man preach, makes a Man do and suffer much? But in the Course of this Year, Self will be totally dead: Why? Because, so to speak, every true *Israelite* will be a kind of a God, a Demi-God; in the End of this Year, they will be swallowed up in God; they will almost forget themselves, they will be so taken up in beholding of God; as I remember once of hearing a precious Preacher say, that the Saints in Heaven would be so much taken up in beholding God and the Lamb, that they would scarce look about them to observe who was next them. Self-Righteousness, Self-Ease, Self-Love, Self-Security, will be quite dead; yea, all Enemies, the whole Offspring and Generation of them, shall all die, there shall not be an *Hittite* or *Canaanite* in all the Land. 3dly, Sorrow shall be dead, for they shall not say, I am sick; for *God shall wipe away all Tears from their Eyes, and the Lamb shall lead them to living Fountains of Water.*

The *fourth* Head in the Method propounded, was to offer some Reasons why this Month *Abib* was to be observed. Let it suffice that they are only

only suggested; as what hath been offered upon the preceding Heads does anticipate what might be enlarged upon here. I. The Command of God is the Cause why they should observe this Month *Abib*; *observe the Month of Abib*. II. Because the Lord brought them out of the Land of *Egypt* in this Month; *for in the Month of Abib the Lord thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by Night*. III. Because of the Danger, Disorder, and Difficulty, which attend them in their coming out by Night. And, (1st) It imports Danger: When Men move in the Night, there is Danger, and indeed great Danger is there in being in *Egypt*; they are in Danger of Hell-Fire, in Jeopardy every Moment, in Danger of the Judgment: And the Soul which comes out by Night, says, it is sensible of its Danger; as the Jailor was, when he cries, *What shall I do to be saved?* The poor Sinner sees that its Danger was like that of a Mariner asleep upon the Main-mast in the midst of a Tempest, or like one asleep when the House is all in Flames; it looks back, and sees many lying dead in the Place where it came from. (2dly) It imports Disorder: When one moves in the Night, it is attended with Confusion, some Things are not done with Order and Regularity: The *Israel* of God are not to be supposed to be distinct in every Shape of their Marching, as it was Night with them in a great measure when they came forth; or, as it is said of *Israel*, like Men who dream, Men see Men at this Season like Trees walking, not so distinctly as in the Day, after the Night is over. (3dly) And Difficulty:

I cannot

I cannot tell you all the Difficulties which are in the Way; there is the *Red-Sea*, the Wilderness, many Enemies; sometimes Difficulties from within, from Friends, from Enemies, and from ourselves. IV. The Reason why this Month is to be observed is, because of the *great Deliverance* they had in this Month. V. Because of the marvellous Things which take Place in this Month, which have been copiously discoursed of already.

Therefore, finally, we now proceed to the Conclusion of the Whole; where we may,

1. Learn, that there is a Time wherein God's *Israel* are in *Egypt*, wherein they are in Bondage, in Slavery. This is certain, *we were Enemies in our Minds, serving divers Lusts.*

2. Learn, that there is a Time wherein they are brought from Bondage; as sure as there is a Time to be born, so sure there is a Time to be born again. I do not say, that all God's *Israel* can tell the Time wherein they were born again; for as in the natural Birth, many are born in the Night, so in the spiritual Birth: I doubt not but many are born in the Night, for they came out of *Egypt* by Night.

3. Learn, that as there is a Night, so likewise there is a Day. It is true, we read of some who are all their Life-times subject to Bondage; but I dare say this, that there is no Child of God, who hath gone through the Course of this Year, but hath found a Difference in his Case, like Day and Night, Summer and Winter, Cold and Heat, one Time or other, some one Thing or another:
Though

Though they came out of *Egypt* by Night, yet it is much if no Light, no Day, no Sun followed after this.

4. Hence we may learn, that God's Way of delivering the Soul, demonstrates and shews who is the Deliverer; as in the Land of *Egypt*, the Finger of God is visibly in the Providence. O Soul! there is much of this in your being brought out of *Egypt*; no Christian, who reflects upon God's Way with them, but surely they must see God in it. Perhaps it was godlike and wonderful; the Means which he made use of were such as one would never expect, the Place where it was wrought, and the Effects of it, are so wonderful.

5. Learn what a dangerous and dismal State it is to be still in *Egypt*, in a natural State; it is to be in the House of Bondage, in Bondage to the Law, in Bondage to one's own Lusts; it is to be in Bondage to a Prince more oppressive than *Pharaoh*; it is to be among the Brick-Kilns, bowed down with Burdens, and black with Mud and Dirt; in short, it is to be in a ruining State, sinking in Satan's Service, to have ourselves and all we have daily exposed to Death, as *Israel* had their Seed and themselves in *Egypt*. Which brings me to,

6. An Use of Examination, to inquire whether or not that Season hath ever begun upon your Souls? If so, my Brethren, then I would ask you, what you know of the Month *Abib*? what you know with respect unto the Nature of the Year?

and what you know as to the Occurrences of this Year? Lastly, if you know it not, cry as *Israel* did in *Egypt*.

Beloved, what do you know as to the Month *Abib*? has it been *the Beginning of Months* to your Souls, and *the first Month of the Year*? If so, then in this Month, you begun to move, the first Motions of spiritual Life appeared with you; it hath been the happy Month, wherein your dead Souls heard the Voice of the Son of God, and lived. If you have experienced what passeth in this Month, then you know it to be *the Beginning of Months*, inasmuch as your begun Deliverance from the galling Burdens in the House of Bondage commenced. Every Soul originally is in the same State which *Simon Magus* was in, namely, *in the Gall of Bitterness, and Band of Iniquity*; but in this Month they begin to immerge out of that State; they move out of the House of Bondage; their Bonds are broke, so that they can chime in with the sweet Singer of *Israel*, saying, O Lord, truly I am thy Servant; *I am thy Servant, and the Son of thy Handmaid: Thou hast loosed my Bands, Israel's begun March out of the Land of Egypt, towards the Land of Canaan, was entered on in the Beginning of this Month: Even so, if you know any thing about this Month, you may remember you begun in the Beginning of it to march out of spiritual Egypt, towards the celestial Canaan. Did Israel abandon the Service of that powerful Oppressor Pharaoh, and shew by their throwing off the Yoke of their severe Task-Masters, that they*
would

would no longer be their obsequious Servants and abject Slaves? so did you, if you have quitted Satan's Service in the Beginning of this Month; the Yoke which hath long chafed you, hath been taken off your Necks, I mean, the Reign and Dominion of Sin; and you have declared, that though other Lords have had the Dominion over you, yet henceforth you will make Mention of a Mediator's Name, and his Righteousness only. Did *Israel* turn their Backs upon *Egypt*, and set their Faces towards *Canaan*, when they marched from the Dominions of *Pharaoh*? so did you turn your Back on the World and Hell, and set your Face towards Heaven, in that much to be observed Month, when you began your March out of spiritual *Egypt*. Do you not remember how the Lord brought you out by Signs and Wonders? have you forgot how the Blood of the slain Lamb was sprinkled upon the Lintel and the two Side-Posts of the Doors of your Houses in the Beginning of this Month. O! Christian, consider how many striking Providences, as so many Signs and Wonders, brought about your Deliverance from Captivity! what different Servants were sent unto you, in the Name of the great *I AM*, to treat with you about your State! what Prayers for you, and what Promises to you have been made! what astonishing Displays of Mercy had you made you, when Heaven marked the Door of your Heart with the Blood of the Lamb of God; thereby signifying unto you, that you should be saved from Death,

while

while others around you were doomed to Destruction! If you have experienced what passes in this Month, you have had an Opportunity to observe, that as *Israel* was brought out of *Egypt*, notwithstanding all the Opposition made against them, so that a Dog was not so much as suffered to move its Mouth, when they moved in that memorable Month; even so, O Soul! if thou hast ever met with the happy Moment, wherein thou wast brought from Bondage to the glorious Liberty of God's Children; thou hast seen this done, counter to the greatest Torrent of Opposition; it hath been performed, contrary to all thy Doubts and Fears; and the Face of every Opposer thereof hath been filled with Confusion, their Mouths stopped, and thou hast marvelled at the marvellous Events of this Month, much in the Manner as we have it most masterly described unto us, in *Psalms* cxiv. *When Israel went out of Egypt, the House of Jacob from a People of strange Language. The Sea saw it, and fled; Jordan was driven back. The Mountains skipped like Rams, and the little Hills like Lambs. What ailed thee, O thou Sea, that thou fleddest? thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back? Ye Mountains, that ye skipped like Rams? and ye little Hills like Lambs? Tremble, thou Earth, at the Presence of the Lord, at the Presence of the God of Jacob. The Power and Presence of God produces marvellous Effects.—Again, if you know the Nature of this Month *Abib*, you know something of meeting with amazing Difficulties about the Beginning of it, even after you have left *Egypt*, you have*

had the *Egyptians* pursue you, and render your Case more arduous at the *Red-Sea* than ever : So, if thou art an *Israelite* indeed, it is very probable, yea, I am pretty sure of it, in point of Experience, that thou hast been harder pressed by the *Egyptian* Enemy, who pursued thee after thy Departure out of the House of Bondage than before. Hast thou not stood astonished at the ungodly Crew of those cursed Corruptions which came after thee, even to the *Red-Sea* ; where, when thou thoughtest that the Bitterness of Death was over, yet then thou hast been ready to say, *Were there no Graves in Egypt, that we are taken away to die in the Wilderness?* Has not the poor, harassed *Israelite*, been put to say, It had been better for him that he had never made any Profession of going to sacrifice to God in the Wilderness, while he is tempted to think that it is now worse with him than before, all is Delusion, and a Thing of Nought ? But then, O Christian ! was you never made about the Beginning of this Month, under such Circumstances, to *stand still, and see the Salvation of the Lord?* Did not God send some one or other Servant of his, like another *Moses*, to you, saying, *Fear not, fear not, the Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your Peace?* And have you not, consequential to this, seen a Way made for your Escape ; and those very Enemies, who were saying, We will pursue, we will overtake, our Lust shall be satisfied upon them ; have you not looked and seen such, as *Israel* saw the *Egyptians*, their dead Bodies drowned in the *Red-Sea* of Christ's Blood ? *Thus the Lord*
saved

*saved Israel that Day out of the Hand of the Egyptians ; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the Sea-shore. And Israel saw that great Work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians ; and the People feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and his Servant Moses, Exod. xiv. 30, 31. — But again, if this Month hath been the Beginning of Months to you, then you have had your Affections inflamed with divine Love to the Lord therein ; it hath been like the first Month that married Persons live together, wherein there is commonly much Kindness and Pleasure, it is called an *Honey-Month*. Well, the Bridegroom says, he remembers the Endearments of this Month, and hath his Bride forgot them ? *I remember thee, the Kindness of thy Youth, the Love of thine Espousals, when thou wentest after me in the Wilderness, in a Land that was not sown : Israel was then Holiness unto the Lord, and the First-Fruits of his Increase.* — But then further, what know you as to the Year, whereof the Month *Abib* is the Beginning ? has it not been a Year very much variegated ? What a vast Variety have you beheld ? what changing Scenes have you seen ? Seed-time and Harvest, Summer and Winter, Day and Night, Heat and Cold, you have alternately witnessed in your Experience. What have you observed with regard to the remarkable Revolutions of this Year, the quick Transitions, the strange and sudden Changes, respecting yourselves, other Persons and Things ? have you not proved, with the Psalmist, this Point ? Behold, *I have seen an End of all Perfection ; but thy Commandment is ex-**

ceeding broad. — Have you not seen how short-lived every sublunary Enjoyment is, and sealed *Solomon's* sad Truth over and over again in the Course of this Year? *Vanity of Vanities, all is Vanity and Vexation of Spirit.* — Pray, what have you observed in this observable Year, as to the preternatural Appearances which have occurred therein? have you not seen the *Shekinah*, the shining Symbol of the sacred Presence of God, precede and preside over you in your Pilgrimage? — But what know you as to another remarkable Occurrence in the Course of this Year, whereof the Month *Abib* is the Beginning? have you not been involved in very observable Wars, foreign and domestic, external and intestine; not only *with Flesh and Blood, but with Principalities and Powers?* and while you have been in the very Heart and Heat of those Wars, has not the Success seemed doubtful to your Sense, while *Amalek* and *Israel* alternately prevail? Sometimes you have fled, and fallen before the Enemy, and cried out, with *Joshua*, *O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their Backs before their Enemies?* *Josh. vii. 8.* — Again, as you have had Occasion to meet with observable Wars, so also with as observable Conquests and Victories through the Course of this Year, *Rom. viii. 37.* Such Conquests have you obtained, that you may be called not only Conquerors, but *more than Conquerors*, inasmuch as you conquer yourselves; *Fortior est qui se quam qui fortissima vincit mœnia*, “He that conquers himself, is more than he who conquers a Castle.” *You are more than Conquerors*, inasmuch

as you conquer even when you have been conquered, 2 Cor. xii. 9. *Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my Infirmities, that the Power of Christ may rest upon me.* — But, in brief, have you not observed the remarkable Peace which takes Place in the Course of this Year, God's Peace, *the Peace of God which passeth all Understanding*; not Man's Peace, no, not of Man's making, but of God's? and therefore when you have enjoyed the Sweetness of that Peace, you have been inclined to say, with old Simeon, *Now lettest thou thy Servant depart in Peace; for mine Eyes have seen thy Salvation.* In short, the remarkable Occurrences of observable Winds, Earthquakes, Diseases, Deaths, and the like, which the Apostle says he was often in, *in Deaths often*, 2 Cor. xi. 23. So if the Month *Abib* hath been *the Beginning of Months to you, and the first Month of all the Year*, you then have observed some of these observable Occurrences that obtain therein. *Psal. cvii. 43. Who so is wise, and will observe these Things, even they shall understand the loving Kindness of the Lord.* *Hos. xiv, 9. Who is wise, and he shall understand these Things? prudent, and he shall know them? For the Ways of the Lord are right, and the Just shall walk in them; but the Transgressors shall fall therein.*

But, Lastly, we would now conclude the Whole in an Use of Exhortation to such as are yet in *Egypt*, and who have not seen the glorious *Æra* we have been treating of.

USE. Then you have Cause to cry and mourn concerning your sad Case and Situation, as the

Children of *Israel* did, *Exod.* iii. 7—9. before they entered upon the happy *Abib*, because your Case is a most comfortless one. How sad was the Condition of *Egypt*, when plagued with a Darkness which might be felt; but thine is worse in the Nature, and worse in the Continuance! their Darkness lasted but for three Days, but thine will last to the Days of Eternity, unless infinite Mercy prevent; your Condition is dangerous, *Prov.* iv. 19. *The Way of the Wicked is as Darkness.* You know not your Way; you are walking on the Ridge of eternal Destruction; your Condition is full of Horror! We read of the Horror of Darkness, *Gen.* xv. 12. Thou art compassed with Terrors on every Side; the Terrors of the Law, the Terrors of Conscience, the Terrors of the Almighty, the Terrors of eternal Miseries, are all round about thee; tho' perhaps thou art asleep, and dost not perceive them. Will you consider the Evil and Danger of that Bondage and Captivity you are under? it is the most comfortless Captivity, no Comfort in the Pit of Sin, which is the Devil's Prison; therefore called a *Pit, wherein there is no Water*, *Zech.* ix. 11. Indeed Satan promises Pleasure, Profit and Comfort, in the Way of Sin, and in his Service; but, alas! it is but like the cracking of Thorns under a Pot, or like a Glass of sweet Poison, which, so soon as it is swallowed down, it is like the Gall of Asps in the Bowels: *There is no Peace, saith my God, to the Wicked.* The Bondage thou art under, O Sinner! is a wearisome Bondage; Sinners are said to weary themselves to commit Iniquity. Many a wearisome

wearisome Day has the Sinner in the Devil's Service; he leads them about as it were in a Chain; and makes them to drudge in gratifying this, and that, and the other Lust: It is a disgraceful Bondage to be the Devil's Drudge, *who is himself reserved in Chains under Darknes, unto the Judgment of the great Day.* O! who would choose to serve, and be Servant unto that chained, roring Lion; it is the most cruel Bondage that ever was? This Enemy and Avenger handles poor Creatures, who are under his Power, in the most barbarous Manner, torturing both Soul and Body. You have an Emblem of his Cruelty in that poor Man, *Mark v. 2, 5. and Luke viii. 27.* it is a terrible Bondage; there they are said to dwell in Darknes, and in the Regions of the Shadow of Death, where there is nothing but Horror and Terror, a Terror to themselves, and to others round about them. I would sound the Alarm, and warn you to see to yourselves while yet there is Hope. O! ye Children of Wrath, take no Rest in this dismal State, but flee to Jesus Christ, the only Refuge; haste, and make your Escape thither: The State of Wrath is too hot a Climate for you to live in, *Mic. ii. 10. Arise ye, and depart, for this is not your Rest.* O Sinner! knowest thou where thou art? dost thou not see the Danger? The Curse has entered into thy Soul; Wrath is thy Covering; the Heavens are growing blacker and blacker above thy Head: The Earth is weary of thee, the Pit is opening her Mouth for thee; and, should the Thread of thy Life be cut this Moment, thou art thenceforth past all Hope

for ever.—SIRS, If we saw you putting a Cup of Poison to your Mouth, we would fly to you, and snatch it out of your Hands; if we saw the House on Fire about you, while you were fast asleep in it, we would run to you, and drag you out of it: But, alas! ye are in ten thousand Times greater Hazard. Yet we can do no more but tell you your Danger; invite, exhort, beseech, and obtest you to look to yourselves; and lament your Stupidity and Obstinacy, when we cannot prevail with you to take Warning. If there were no Hope of your Recovery, we should be silent, and would *not torment you before the Time*: But though ye be lost and undone, there is Hope in *Israel* concerning this Thing. Wherefore I cry unto you in the Name of the Lord, and in the Words of the Prophet, *Zech. ix. 12. Turn ye to the Strong-hold, ye Prisoners of Hope.*

USE II. Therefore God has sent his Servants, his Gospel-Ministers; as he did his Servants, *Moses* and *Aaron*, to *Israel*, when in *Egyptian* Bondage, to inform them, to preach and proclaim unto them the acceptable Year of the Lord: Therefore we, according to the Word of the Lord, would proclaim Liberty to the Captives, and the Opening of the Prison-Doors to them who are bound. O! Hearers of the Word, to you is the Word of Salvation sent: Satan has made Prisoners of the whole Family of *Adam*; *because we rebelled against the Words of God, and condemned the Counsel of the most High, therefore we are made to sit in Darknes and the Shadow of Death;*

Death; bound and manacled by the God of this World, with the Cords of our own Iniquity, as with Fetters of Iron. But we *bring you glad Tidings of great Joy*; God has broken up the Devil's Prison; *He has broken the Gates of Brass, and cut the Bars of Iron in sunder*; and he comes and cries to his Prisoners to come forth; to them that sit in Darkness, Shew yourselves: And therefore we, as the Heralds of this great King, who has the Armies which are in Heaven following him; and whose Name is written upon his Thigh and Vesture, *the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*. We say, we, as Heralds sent forth in his Name, proclaim the Year of Jubilee unto you, the Year of Release and Freedom from your Bondage and Captivity unto this Enemy. — The Son of God makes you free, and therefore be ye free indeed: He proclaims Liberty to the Captives, and the Opening of the Prison to them who are bound; Liberty from the Guilt of Sin, that it may not condemn; Liberty from the Power of Sin, that it may not reign in your mortal Bodies; Liberty from the Filth and Defilement of Sin, that it may not obstruct Fellowship between God and you; Liberty from the Law, as a Covenant, that it shall not have Power to condemn you; Liberty from the Power and Death of the Grave, that it may not sting you, or have the Victory over you; Liberty from this present evil World, that it may not ensnare you; Liberty from all your Enemies, *that you may serve the Lord without Fear, in Holiness and Righteousness, all the Days of your Lives.*

Unto

Unto you, Men, Brethren, and Fathers, is the Word of this Salvation sent; now is the accepted Time, now is the Day of Salvation: Look to him, and be saved, all the Ends of the Earth; that so this may be the Beginning of Months, and the first Month of all the Year to you.



SERMON

S E R M O N XVIII.

Heaven in Evil.

A M O S iii. 6.

— *Shall there be Evil in a City, and the
Lord hath not done it?*

[Preached at London, June 22, 1760, the Day immediately
preceding the dreadful and unforeseen Death of an only
Child, *Humphrey Potts.*]

MY Friends, Though God is invisible, yet there is certainly such a thing as seeing of him, who is invisible; *Hence, says the Apostle, we remain, as seeing him who is invisible.* It appears to be a Paradox, that we should see a Thing which is invisible, that is, not to be seen; but however odd it may appear, and strange it may sound, we can assure you, in the Name of Clouds and Clouds of Witnesses ascertaining this Truth: That even in the Midnight of the thickest Darkness, when there hath been no Light of the Sun, Moon or Stars, they have seen God, shining like the Sun at Noon-day about them; I mean, when the Soul hath

hath been in such a Situation, like what *Jonah* was in, as he expresses it, *Out of the Belly of Hell cried I, and thou heardest my Voice; I will look again toward thy holy Temple.* When the Soul hath been walking in Darkness, and, as the Prophet says, hath had no Light, no comforting Light; yet even then there is such a Thing as trusting and staying ones self upon its God. What is the Cause, Christians, that you and I are not more profound Scholars in Christ's School, where there is nothing that God says or does, which we hear or see, that we touch, taste, smell, handle, or meet with, any manner of Way in the World, but it sets God before us? so that the very Heathens could say, *Presentem refert quæ libet herba Deum*; "Every Pile of Grass points forth the Presence of God." But did I say, what is the Cause that we are not deeper Divines? Why, it is because of the Dulness of our Capacities; or rather, as our Lord words it, because we are *Fools, and slow of Heart to believe*, as he said to his Disciples. God is every where; God is in every Place, in every Providence, from the great to the small, from the smiting to the smiling; there is not a Piece of Bread we eat, a Drop of Water we drink, or a Garment we wear, but there is a Beam of God to be seen in and about it. Yea, there is no one Thing through the whole extensive Universe, good or bad, but the Lord is some how concerned in it; as it is said in our Text, *Shall there be Evil in a City, and the Lord hath not done it?*

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These Words are in the Form of an Interrogation, and the Interrogation bears a strong Negation, *it is; q. d.* If there be Evil in any City, God hath done it. Hath he done it? Yea, he hath surely done it; as sure as the Lion rores in the Forest when he hath taken his Prey; or as a Bird falls, where there is a Gin or Snare; or as sure as when an alarming Trumpet is blown, that there is Danger: So surely, when there is Evil in a City, that is, upon a Place, People, or particular Person, as sure the Lord hath done it, *Amos iii. 2—9.* *You only have I known of all the Families of the Earth; therefore I will punish you for all your Iniquities. Can two walk together, except they be agreed? Will a Lion rore in the Forest, when he hath no Prey? will a young Lion cry out of his Den, if he hath taken nothing? Can a Bird fall in a Snare upon the Earth, where no Gin is for him? shall one take up a Snare from the Earth, and have taken nothing at all? Shall a Trumpet be blown in the City, and the People not be afraid? shall there be Evil in a City, and the Lord hath not done it? Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his Secret unto his Servants the Prophets. The Lion hath rored, who will not fear? the Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy? Publish in the Palaces at Ashdod, and in the Palaces in the Land of Egypt, and say, Assemble yourselves upon the Mountains of Samaria; and behold the great Tumults in the midst thereof, and the Oppressed in the midst thereof. But not to enlarge upon the Explication of the Words, further than observing to you,*
First,

First, The Subject spoken of, *Evil*.

Secondly, What is predicated of it; *in a City, and the Lord hath not done it?*

First, The Subject spoken of, is Evil. By which sometimes is understood Sin itself, or moral Evil, as you may see in *Isa. xiii. 11. And I will punish the World for their Evil, and the Wicked for their Iniquity, &c.* that is, for their Sin. But we incline not to take the Term in this Sense here; but rather, 2dly, For the Evil of Affliction, Danger, Punishment, Harm, Hurt, Loss, or the like. This is an Evil of Punishment, or a penal Evil; in which Sense we conceive it is taken in *Gen. xlv. 29. And if ye take this also from me, and Mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray Hairs with Sorrow to the Grave.* Thus by Mischief befalling him, is meant some afflicting Stroke in the divine Dispensation, *2 Kings xxii. 20. Behold therefore, I will gather thee unto thy Fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy Grave in Peace, and thine Eyes shall not see all the Evil which I will bring upon this Place.*

Secondly, We have what is predicated of this Subject. 1st, As to the Place where it affects, here said *a City*. 2dly, As to the Person by whom the Lord affects; *and the Lord hath not done it?* 1st, As to the Place, it is called a City. The Place is put for the Persons who dwell there. It is said, *Acts xix. 29. And the whole City was filled with Confusion*; that is, the Citizens: By it then you see we may understand, either the Inhabitants of the Place in general; or as a general includes
its

its particular and individual Persons. Sometimes by the Word, is understood the Church of God; *the Watchmen that went about the City found me.* 2dly, We have the Person who inflicts this Evil that affects the City, it is the Lord, it is *Jehovah*. Now we have told you, that this is not to be understood of moral Evil; if so, it would make God the Author of Sin, which he cannot be, as *James* speaks, Chap. i. 13. *Let no Man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with Evil, neither tempteth he any Man.* Now in this Sense the Agency of God is not in this Case, but as it respects Punishment, Affliction, Judgment, Hurt, Loss, Danger, or the like, it proceeds from God. Having thus gone through the Words, we observe this

DOCTRINE. *That there is no Evil or Affliction, that affects a Place, People, or Person, but the Lord hath an Hand in it.*

Method.

- I. Confirm this Doctrine.
- II. Shew more generally what may be that Evil which affects a Place, People, or Person.
- III. Shew how it may affect them.
- IV. Why it affects them, or wherefore God hath an Hand in it.
- V. Shew what kind of a Hand the Lord hath in the Evil, which affects a People, Place, or Person.
- VI. and Lastly, Improve the Whole.

I. As to the first of these, the Confirmation of this Doctrine, That there is no Evil which affects us, but God hath a Hand in it: This I would confirm, before we go further, by the Mouth of two or three habile Witnesses, proving that the plain Prophet *Amos* did not publish a Falsity. Well then, the first Witness that we have is in the Case of *Naomi*, *Ruth* i. 20, 21. *And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara; for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty: Why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?* All the Adversity she underwent, you see how she looks upon it as the Doing of the Lord; *the Almighty hath dealt bitterly with me: He brought me home empty; the Almighty hath afflicted me.*

The next Witness which we bring to prove this Point, is one that God gives a Character of his Integrity and Uprightness, as he never gave to another, it is perfect and upright *Job*; *Hast thou considered my Servant Job?* Well, what does he say when such sad Things, such sore Evils affect him? *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the Name of the Lord.* He does not say, as some observe, *Deus dedit, Diabolus abstulit*; "God has given, and the Devil has taken away:" But, "the Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away," &c. And how does he answer his Wife, who should have been the joint Partner with him in his Wo, and the Calamities under which he groined?

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She bid him *curse God, and die*. What, Woman, dost thou say? why, thou speakest indeed like one of the foolish Women: For, *shall we receive Good at the Hand of God, and shall we not receive Evil?*

The next Witness that we would lead to corroborate this Point, is *Isaiab* the Prophet: *I form the Light, and create Darknes; I make Peace, and create Evil: I the Lord do all these Things*, Isa. xlv. 7. The next is the old, honest, good, weeping Prophet *Jeremiab*, Lam. iii. 38, 39. *Out of the Mouth of the most High proceedeth not Evil and Good. Wherefore doth a living Man complain, a Man for the Punishment of his Sins?*

Now we having confirmed this Doctrine, that there is no Evil affecting a People, Place, or Person, but the Lord hath an Hand in it. We next proceed,

II. To shew what is that Evil wherewith the Lord affects us? We answer, that all Evil may be considered as belonging to one or other of these two Classes: Either it may be viewed as *Malum Culpa*, "the Evil of Sin;" or it may be, *Malum Poena*, "the Evil of Punishment." As to the first of these, it is not our Province particularly at this Time, and from this Text, to treat; inasmuch as we do not view the Sense of the Terms, as pointing immediately thereat. This, God is not the Author of, though he hath some Concern about it; for it is not without his Prescience or Foreknowledge, neither in some Sense without his Will; though not his Will of Approbation, yet

by his Will of Permission he suffers it to be, and rules all for Good; as *Augustine* saith, *Peccatum tametsi non bonum, tamen in bonum*; that is, Sin, though it be not good, yet it may be ordered to Good.—But the other general Evil, is the Evil of Punishment, or Affliction. Now I cannot pretend to speak of all the particular Evils, which the Hand of God afflicts a City, Place, People, or Person with; for, *many are the Afflictions of the Righteous*. There are Evils which are of a more general Nature, and affect accordingly: As for Instance, there is the Evil of War, of Famine, of Pestilence, of Earthquakes, of Fire, and Destruction from the Lord; all which the Lord does: An awful Representation of which we have in the 7th Chapter of *Ezekiel*, the Sword God is said to send, *And I will send a Sword to avenge the Quarrel of my Covenant*. It is indeed the Sin of the People, which is the procuring Cause of the Sword; but then it is the sinless Hand of God that sends it; as it is this Day devouring throughout *Europe, Asia, Africa, and America*.

Famine likewise is one of those penal Evils, wherewith God afflicts a People; *I will send a Famine*, not of Bread, or of Water: As the Psalmist speaks, *The Lord turns a fat Land into Barrenness, for the Sin of those that dwell therein*; such as the Famine in the Siege of *Samaria*, &c. *Jerusalem's* Pestilence and *Plagues* he hath an Hand in, even that which walketh in Darkness, and destroys at Noon-day; as that he sent upon the Account of *David's Sin*: *And the Lord sent a Pestilence upon Israel,*

Israel, from Morning unto the Time appointed; and there died of the People, from Dan to Beersheba, seventy thousand. Or if it is an Earthquake, this Evil God only is the Author of: Such as what we heard of some Years ago at *Lisbon*; or what we have lately heard of in the *Ottoman* Empire, that Part of it which was once called the Holy Land, where God's *Israel* dwelt. We find that *Antioch*, that famous City where the Disciples were first called Christians, is almost a Heap of Ruins; and that *Laodicea* is now wholly swallowed up, and is no more. He sometimes sends the Evil of consuming Fire, as he did about a Century ago into this City; and so he hath often, again and again, threatened it and our Dwellings; as he hath lately done to our Brethren at *Boston* in *America*: Yea, sometimes the Evil is not so general, affecting all in general and promiscuously, but it is more particular and personal; from Cities it comes to Families and particular Persons. Thus God sends an Evil in a particular Family: There are many Arrows in his Quiver. Sometimes he afflicts a Family with some one or other sore Evil; as perhaps a sudden and surprising Death, or some sudden or unforeseen Accident, of which we are meeting with daily Instances among our Acquaintances: It was but the other Night I attended the Funeral of a Gentleman whom Death suddenly seized; likewise it was but the other Day that a Gentlewoman, who sometimes attended here, while busy about the Affairs of her Family, was suddenly seized in a Moment, and died in a little

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Time;

Time; and God only knows what another Day may bring forth as to you or me.

Suffer me here to offer a Quotation from *Hervy's Meditations*, who says, " Such Strokes must not only grieve the Relatives, but surprise the whole Neighbourhood. They sound a powerful Alarm to heedless, dreaming Mortals; and are intended as a Remedy for our carnal Security. Such passing Bells inculcate loudly our Lord's Admonition; *Take ye heed, watch and pray; for ye know not when the Time is.* We nod, like intoxicated Creatures, upon the very Verge of a tremendous Precipice. These astonishing Dispensations are the kind Messengers of Heaven, to rouse us from our Supineness, and quicken us into timely Circumspection. I need not surely accommodate them with Language, nor act as their Interpreter; let every one's Conscience be awake, and this will appear their awful Meaning: ' O! ye Sons of Men, in the midst of Life you are in Death. No State, no Circumstances can ascertain your Preservation a single Moment. So strong is the Tyrant's Arm, that nothing can resist its Force; so unerring his Aim, that nothing can elude the Blow; sudden, as Lightning, sometimes is his Arrow launched, and wounds and kills in the Twinkling of an Eye. Never promise yourselves Safety in any Expedient, but constant Preparation. The fatal Shafts fly so promiscuously, that none can guess the next Victim: Therefore *be ye always ready, for in such an Hour as ye think not, the final Summons cometh.*'

“ Be

“ Be ye always ready, for in such an Hour as ye think not — Important Admonition ! methinks it reverberates from Sepulchre to Sepulchre ; and addresses me with Line upon Line, Precept upon Precept. The reiterated Warning, I acknowledge, is too needful ; may co-operating Grace render it effectual ! The momentous Truth, though worthy to be engraved on the Tables of a most tenacious Memory, is slightly sketched on the transient Flow of Passion. We see our Neighbours fall, we turn pale at the Shock, and feel a trembling Dread : No sooner are they removed from our Sight, but, driven in the Whirl of Business, or lulled in the Languors of Pleasure, we forget the Providence, and neglect its Errand. The Impression made on our unstable Minds, is like the Trace of an Arrow through the penetrated Air, or the Path of a Keel in the furrowed Wave. Strange Stupidity ! To cure it, another Monitor bespeaks me from a neighbouring Stone. It contains the Narrative of a poor Mortal, snatched from his Friends, and hurried to the awful Bar, without Leisure either to take a last Farewel of the one, or to put up so much as a single Prayer preparatory for the other ; killed, according to the usual Expression, by a sudden Stroke of Casualty.

“ Was it then a random Blow ? Doubtless the Stroke came from an aiming, though invisible Hand. God presideth over the Armies of Heaven ; God ruleth among the Inhabitants of the Earth ; and God conducteth what Men call Chance. Nothing, nothing comes to pass through

a blind and undiscerning Fatality. If Accidents happen, they happen according to the exact Foreknowledge, and in consequence of the determinate Counsels of almighty Wisdom. The Lord, with whom are the Issues of Death, signed the Warrant, and gave the high Commission; the seemingly fortuitous Disaster was only the Minister, appointed to execute the supreme Decree. When the impious Monarch was mortally wounded, it seemed to be a casual Shot; *A certain Man drew a Bow at a venture*, 1 Kings xxii, 34. At a venture, as he thought: But his Hand was strengthened by an omnipotent Aid; and the Shaft levelled by an unerring Eye. So that what we term Casualty, is really Providence; accomplishing deliberate Designs, but concealing its own Interposition. How comforting this Reflection! How admirably adapted to sooth the throbbing Anguish of the Mourners, and compose their Spirits into a quiet Submission! How excellently suited to dissipate the Fears of godly Survivors, and create a calm Intrepidity even amidst innumerable Perils!

“O! how thin is the Partition between this World and another! How short the Transition, from Time to Eternity! The Partition nothing more than the Breath in our Nostrils; and the Transition may be made in the Twinkling of an Eye — Poor *Chremylus*, I remember, arose from the Diversion of a Card-Table, and dropped into the Dwellings of Darkness. One Night *Corinna* was all Gaiety in her Spirits, all Finery in her Apparel, at a magnificent Ball; the next Night she

she lay pale and stiff, an extended Corpse, and ready to be mingled with the mouldering Dead. Young *Atticus* lived to see his ample and commodious Seat completed ; but not to spend one joyous Hour under the stately Roof. The Sashes were hung to admit the Day, but the Master's Eyes are closed in Death : The Chambers were furnished to invite Repose, but their Lord rests in the lower Parts of the Earth : The Gardens were planned, and a thousand elegant Decorations designed, but their intended Possessor is gone down to ' the Place of Skulls ; ' gone down to the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

“ While I am recollecting, many, I question not, are experiencing the same tragical Vicissitude. The Eyes of that sublime Being, who sits upon the Circle of the Earth, and views all its Inhabitants with one comprehensive Glance, even now behold many Tents in Affliction ; such Affliction as overwhelmed the *Egyptians* in that fatal Night, when the destroying Angel sheathed his Arrows in all the Pride of their Strength. Some sinking to the Floor from their easy Chair, and deaf even to the most piercing Shrieks of their distracted Relations. Some giving up the Ghost, as they are reclined, all alone, under the shady Arbour, to taste the Sweets of the flowery Scene. Some, as they sail, associated with a Party of Pleasure, along the silver Stream, while Wine and Music flow around. Some intercepted as they are returning home ; and some interrupted as they enter upon an important Negotiation. Some arrested, with the Gain of Injustice

in their Hands; and some surprised, in the immediate Act of Lewdness or of Cruelty.

“Legions, Legions of Disasters, such as no Prudence can foresee, no Care prevent, lie in wait to accomplish our Doom. A starting Horse may throw his Rider, and at once dash his Body against the Stones, and fling his Soul into the invisible World. A Stack of Chimneys may tumble into the Street, and crush the unwary Passenger under the Ruins; or even a Tile, dropping from the Roof, may be as fatal as the Fall of the whole Structure: So frail, so very attenuated is the Thread of Life, that it not only bursts before the Storm, but breaks even at a Breeze. The most common Occurrences, those from which we suspect not the least Harm, may prove the Weapons of our Destruction. A Grape-stone, a despicable Fly, may be more mortal than *Goliath*, with all his formidable Armour. Nay, if God give Command, our very Comforts become killing: The Air we breathe is our Bane, and the Food we eat the Vehicle of Death. That last Enemy has unnumbered Avenues for his Approach; yea, lies intrenched in our very Bosom, and holds his Fortress even in the Seat of our Life. The crimson Fluid, which distributes Health, is impregnated with the Seeds of Death*: Some un-
seen

- * As Man, perhaps, the Moment of his Breath,
Receives the lurking Principle of Death:
The young Disease that must subdue at length,
Grows with his Growth, and strengthens with his Strength.

Pope's Ethics.

seen Impediment may obstruct its Passage, or some unknown Violence may divert its Course; in either of which Cases it acts the Part of a poisonous Draught, or a deadly Stab. The Body is a delicately fine Machine, consisting of ten thousand Parts, playing ten thousand Motions; and a very small Pin taken out, may disconcert the whole Frame; a single Wheel clogged, may put a Stop to all the vital Movements.

“ Since then we are so liable to be dispossessed of our earthly Tabernacle, let us look upon ourselves only as Tenants at Will; and hold ourselves in perpetual Readiness to depart at a Moment's Warning. Without such an habitual Holiness, we are like Wretches that sleep on the Top of a Mast, while a horrid Gulf yawns, or furious Waves rage below: And where can be the Peace, what the Satisfaction of such a State? Whereas a prepared Condition will inspire a Chearfulness of Temper, not to be ruffled by every low Vexation; and create a Firmness of Mind, not to be overthrown by the most threatening Dangers. When the City is fortified with Walls, furnished with Provision, guarded by able and resolute Troops, what have the Inhabitants to fear? what may they not enjoy? So, just so, or rather by a much surer Band, are connected the real Taste of Life, and the constant Thought of Death.”

Now, before we proceed to the Prosecution of the following Heads, proposed in the Method, let

us pause a while upon, and improve what has been already advanced.

USE I. Is it so then, my dear Hearers, as hath been said, according to this Text and Doctrine? Hence learn that there is such a thing as Providence, which is *Regina Mundi*, "the Queen of the World." Every thing therein is preserved, governed, and directed by Providence. This is very plainly pointed forth unto us in the Book of *Jonah*, in these Terms: *And God prepared a Wind, a Worm, a Fish, a Gourd*; and the like; This Providence is versant about every thing in the World. — Look, my Friends, to the great Things in the World; and let me ask even an Atheist himself, Did that Sun, the great Candle of the Creation, make itself? Did the fortuitous Concourse of Atoms give it Existence, and infuse into it all those salutary Influences which daily proceed from it? How can any conceive so very incongruously in this Case! And as it did not create itself, so neither does it command itself, and run its circular Race with such exact Regularity, from Day to Day, but by the Direction of that God, who holds its Reins in his Hand. O! cannot we discern the God of Providence, in Sun, Moon, and Stars; in the Winds, Waters, Air, and Elements; in Fire, Hail, Snow, and stormy Wind, as the Psalmist observes, which fulfil his Will? As the Heavens, the Earth, and Seas, did not make themselves; so neither do they preserve themselves: The same Power that was exerted in creating them, is exercised in preserving

preserving them : *The Lord be sends Rain, and fruitful Seasons.* Can any of the Gods of the Gentiles cause Rain? No; as the God of Nature hath produced all Nature, so he is the Supporter of it. He that said, *Let there be Light, and there was Light,* hath also said, that *While Sun and Moon endures, there shall be Seed-time and Harvest, Summer and Winter, Day and Night, Cold and Heat.* We must be very inattentive Persons, if we perceive not a Providence in changing the elementary Air, in turning the Winds, in restraining Rains; so that sometimes Death and Famine come even to our Doors, but is quickly countermanded; and again Life and Joy fit upon every Countenance. How striking is the Light, wherein the Psalmist sets this Point of Providence! *Psalm cvii. 33. He turneth Rivers into a Wilderness, and the Water-springs into dry Ground; a fruitful Land into Barrenness; he turneth the Wilderness into a standing Water, and dry Ground into Water-springs; &c.* O! how observably hath Providence interposed betwixt us and dire Calamities; such as Famine, Death, and Diseases? How hath Providence appeared in some late Years, as if it would have cut off the Flock from the Field, making our Stalls void of Herds, and our Barns barren of the Staff of Life, through the Raging of a contagious Distemper among the Cattle, and through the Falling of continual and excessive Rains in the Time of Harvest? How easy were it for God to send a Famine, were he but to
 continue

continue this Course in his Providence for some Days longer? Yea, how easy were it for him, to translate that Plague, which hath prevailed among our Flocks, from them to the human Species? What visible Bar hath there been in the Way thereof? Why sure, no other than this, that we now treat, the over-ruling, directing and governing Providence of God. — O! my Beloved, they must be most unthinking Mortals, that have heard and seen so much of the Works of the Almighty in the World, and in these Lands, and yet not learn to preach a Providence. But as we may preach a Providence, with regard unto the more grand Affairs of the World; so we are no less warranted to preach it, with respect unto the more inferior Affairs thereof; for it extends unto the minutest of the Creatures, and their Acts, even such as seem casual or accidental to us: What more minute than the very exact Number of the Hairs of our Head? What seems to be less considerable than the losing one of these Hairs? yet, as seemingly inconsiderable as it appears, nevertheless it falls under the Cognizance and Government of Providence; *For the very Hairs of your Head are all numbered,* Matt. x. 30. He who numbers the Stars, and calls them all by their Names, likewise numbers the Hairs of our Heads. What seems to be more trivial than the Falling of a Sparrow? *Yet not one falls to the Ground, without the Providence or Will of our heavenly Father.* Yea, the Fowls of the Air are all of them under the Wings of
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Providence; *For though they neither sow nor reap, nor gather into Barns, yet our heavenly Father feeds them: Are ye not much better than they?* Matt. vi. 26. *Consider the Lilies of the Field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet the Providence of Heaven is conversant about them: For does God so clothe the Grass, which To-day is, and To-morrow is cut down, how much more shall he not clothe you, O ye of little Faith?* Yea, the very Dust that we tread upon, you see how Providence is concerned with it, *Exod. viii. 16.* Yea, the very Insects of the Earth, as Frogs, Worms, and the like, the Providence of God is employed about them; hence he calls them his Army. But what shall I say? Every Christian, surely, may observe a Providence attending of him, from the Hour of his Nativity, to this present Moment; yea, may be before you were brought forth out of the Womb; while ye were Embrios in Nature, Providence appeared for you. How often have you been at the Gates of Death, by some imminent and impending Danger; there hath been but an Inch, so to speak, betwixt you and Death! — Can you not look back, and call to Mind the Lord's appearing in his powerful Providence for you? Is there nothing of this Nature which you have remarked, respecting your spiritual Birth, as to the Time and Season of it, the Instrument of it, or as to the Manner of it? — Can you not perceive a Providence also, with respect unto your spiritual Life? Have you not seen those very Things which you thought
 would

would terminate in your Death, and tend to your Hurt, on the contrary turn out for your Health, and terminate in your Life? May be Providence appeared to you, like *Joseph's* Prison, as if it would have been the Place of your Death; but it hath proved in the Issue to be the Place wherein you was prepared for your future Preferment: God there learned you to *divine, interpret, and reveal Secrets*. Have you never seen a Providence, in God's causing the very Ravens to feed you, (these unnatural Birds that scarce feed their own Young) as they did the Prophet: That is to say, those very Persons, whom you expected nothing but Emptiness and Sorrow from, you have found Instruments of Fulness and Joy unto you? Have you not seen a Providence in increasing your Cruse of Oil, the little that you had; and blessing your Barrel of Meal, as he did the Widow's? Have you not, when you were thrown into a Den of devouring and hungry Lions, like *Daniel*, witnessed a Providence? That is to say, when you have been under the most dark and death-like Dispensations; God hath so disposed these Dispensations, that, contrary to their very Nature, like the Den of Lions to *Daniel*, they have fawned upon you? Have you not seen Providence, as the three Children did, when cast into the fiery Furnace, it appeared such as you could not possibly survive; but, behold, instead of burning you, though you were cast into that Furnace bound, you have come out of it loose, and not so much as an Hair of your Head have you

you lost by it? Have you never, with *Moses*, turned aside at Times, to see these great Wonders of his Providence, how you and the Church of God have been for Years, as a Bush burning, all in a Blaze, and yet not consumed to this Day? *Jonah* was certainly a very experienced Preacher of Providence; and could well tell in his own Case, how the Lord had proceeded with him; and therefore herein he could very pertinently preach this Part of the Preaching that God bid him.

USE II. Learn what Need we have of Grace, who are liable to such Floods of Evils; yea, of much Grace. *Noah*, moved with Fear, being warned of God, prepared an Ark, and went into it; and where else could he have lived, in those great Storms and Floods which came upon the World? Surely, God's Storms and Waves will beat much in these last Days: If all of them may come over any Man, then all of us need an Ark, and to haste unto it; that we be in a State of Favour with God by Jesus Christ. All our Estates may fail us; a Fire of God from Heaven may consume them; all our Friends may fail us, yea, all our Hearts may fail us; *Mens Hearts failing them for Fear*. What then will be a Cordial to keep us, but the Favour of God, and a State of Grace; *that the Lord Jesus Christ be with our Spirits?* Nine several Times in the ten first Verses of *Paul's* first Epistle to the *Corinthians*, is Jesus Christ named; saith one, who hath well observed, to note who it is that is all in all, in Storms a Saviour;

Saviour; yea, indeed in all Conditions : It is Jesus, as the same Observator saith, that is made *Mel in Ore, Melos in Aure, Jubilum in Corde*; Jesus Christ in all Conflicts is Honey in the Mouth, Harmony in our Ear, Jubilee or great Joy in our Hearts, when all the Waves and Billows of Affliction beat upon us.



S E R M O N

Heaven in Evil.

A

S E R M O N

PREACHED IN

CRISPIN-STREET, Spital-Square,
London, June 29, 1760;

Occasioned by the Death of an only Child,
Humphrey Potts; who was killed in the City, as he
was walking with his Father, by the sudden
Fall of an House, June 23, 1760,
in the eighth Year of his Age.

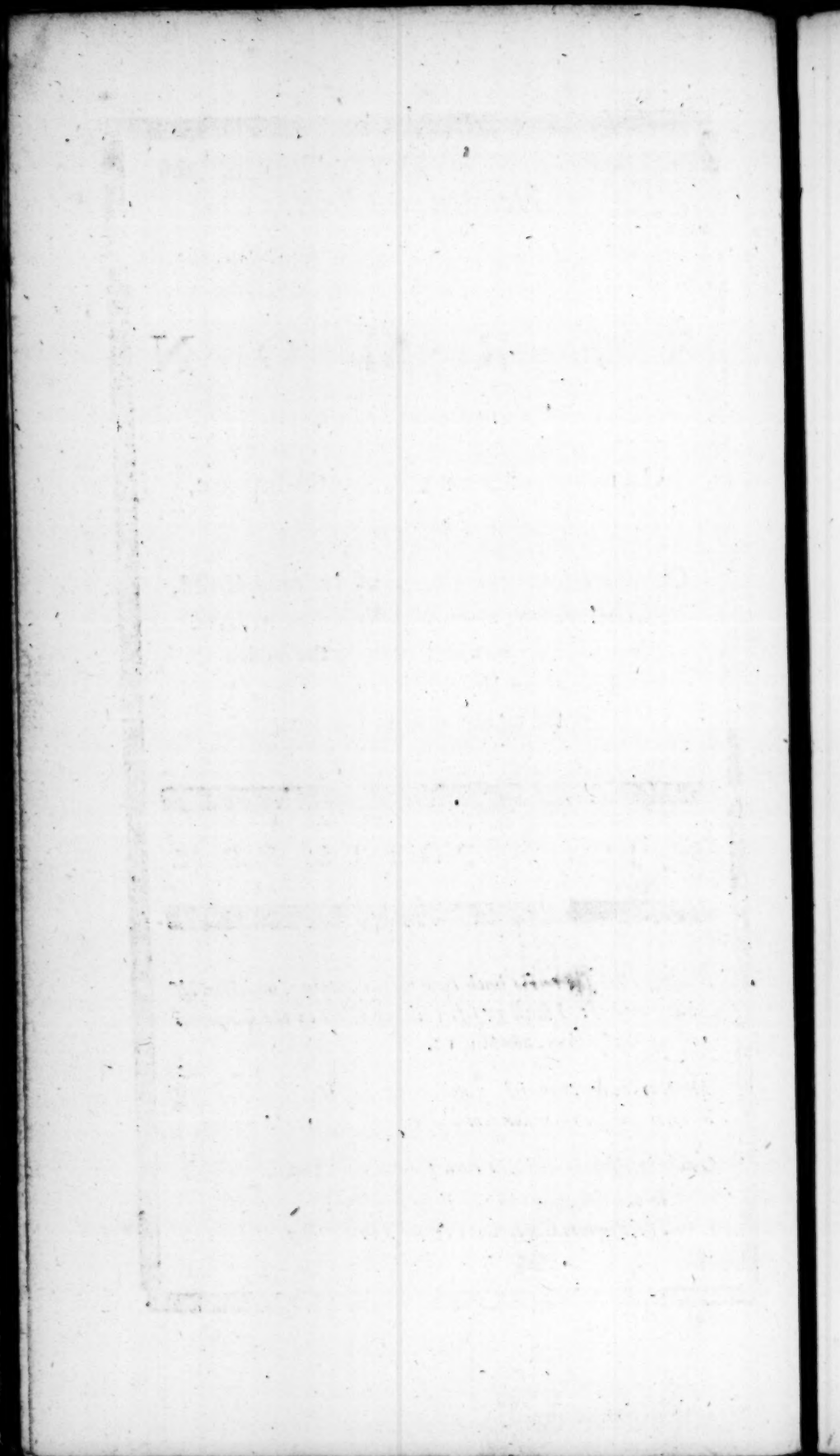
By JOHN POTTS, V.D.M.

*What shall I say? He hath both spoken unto me, and Himself
hath done it: I shall go softly all my Years in the Bitterness
of my Soul. Isa. xxxviii. 15.*

*Mortem levius toleraret, si non unicus fuisset;
Si alter qui parentis dolorem leniret superfuisset. AMBROS.*

Omnis in Ascanio cari stat cura parentis. VIRGIL.

*In one Ascanus run our Fear and Joy;
The Parents Cares were center'd in the Boy.*



S E R M O N X I X .

Heaven in Evil.

A M O S i i i . 6 .

— *Shall there be Evil in a City, and the
Lord hath not done it?*

BELOVED, Is there now any among this Multitude, that have been saying in their Hearts, *Nay, but if one were sent from the Dead, they will repent?* Why then, the God who sent me Years ago among you with that Message, *Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great City, and preach unto it the Preaching that I bid thee;* hath as it were this Day sent me from the Dead unto you; from the Gates of Death I am come this Day! I am escaped alone to tell you, while the Lord hath smote the four Corners of the House, and it fell upon the young Man, my only Child, and he is dead. Hence, now by a dead Son, and a Father miraculously preserved from Death, equally near unto him is God preaching to us in Providence: And by this Portion of Scripture, which I was led the last

Lord's Day to speak from, as a Preface to the awful and tremendous Stroke which Heaven inflicted upon me the very Morrow thereafter; *Shall there be Evil in a City, and the Lord hath not done it?*

The Doctrine observed from these Words was this: *That there is no Evil or Affliction, which affects a Place, People, or Person, but the Lord hath an Hand in it.*

The Method was, I. To confirm the Doctrine. II. Specify some of those Evils wherewith the Lord affects us. III. Shew how the Lord affects us with Evil. IV. Why he does so. V. Shew what kind of an Hand the Lord has in that Evil wherewith he affects us. VI. The Improvement of the Whole.

Now, when we entered upon this Subject the last Lord's Day, we proceeded to that remarkable Part of the *second* general Head, respecting casual and accidental Evils suddenly affecting us; and gave you a recent Instance or two of the Evil of sudden Death affecting a Gentleman and a Gentlewoman, who occasionally worshipped with us; as also the apparent Danger which seemed to threaten my own Life. Here we were obliged to break off, as if God had said, *Stop here, thou Son of Man, and see what another Day will bring forth; for thou knowest not what a Day may bring forth.* — Well, before the Close of another Day, an Evil, a sudden and shocking Evil touched me in the tenderest Part, by the amazing Death of my dear and only Child, who perished in my Presence; by which affecting

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Providence, I now more clearly see than ever, that *there shall not be Evil in a City, and the Lord hath not done it.* Now this leads me to the

III^d General Head, which was to shew how the Lord affects a People or Person with Evil. We answer,

First, He affects them *universally* and *all over*, as he did *Job*, from the Sole of his Foot unto his Crown. Sometimes God puts forth his Hand, and toucheth all that we have, all our Possessions, all our Relations, all our Enjoyments, and all our Comforts; the Evil pervades and goes through every Part, like a strong Medicine given to the Patient under a stubborn Malady, which searcheth every Part of the Body, runs through every Vein, extending itself to the minutest Member, and affecting the remotest Extremities of the Parts: And as there is a physical Reason for this, that the Medicine should attack the morbid Matter or Disease, which hath infused its Infection into every Cell and Pore of the Body; so there is a spiritual Cause why God affects us with Evil universally and all over: It is because the Evil of Sin hath poisoned every Drop of our Blood, and diffused its deadly Contagion through the whole Creation. Wherefore God, in adorable Wisdom, causeth the Evil of Affliction to run parallel with the Evil of Sin, *Rom. v. 12. Wherefore, as by one Man Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin; and so Death passed upon all Men, for that all have sinned.*

Secondly, As God affecteth and afflicteth us with Evil universally, so he affects us therewith very *particularly*, in some very particular Part, in the most delicate and tender, where we are the least able to bear it; he touches and pricks the very Apple of our Eye. If one Gourd has grown up, which we are exceeding glad of, as *Jonab* was of his, then God prepares a Worm, even in the very Bloom and Morning of our growing Gourd, he smites it, and it withers. Did *Israel* love *Joseph* more than all his Children, and clothe him with a particular Favour of his fatherly Affection, by making a Coat of many Colours? Why then, God will affect him in this peculiar Part with Evil; for when his Father had sent him forth to see after the Welfare of his Brethren, they bring the sad Tidings to his Father, that his Son was killed; and, as a sure Sign of it, they shew him his bloody Coat, *Gen. xxxvii. 32, 33. And they sent the Coat of many Colours, and they brought it to their Father, and said, This have we found; know now whether it be thy Son's Coat, or no. And he knew it, and said, It is my Son's Coat; an evil Beast hath devoured him: Joseph is without doubt rent in Pieces.* Does *David* admire the Person, Beauty, and Parts of *Absalom*? Why then, the Lord will make him an Eye-Sore unto his Father while alive, and the very Tearing of his Heart when dead, *2 Sam. xviii. 33. And the King was much moved, and went up to the Chamber over the Gate, and wept; and as he went, thus he said, O my Son Absalom, my Son, my Son Absalom: Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom,*

Abalom, my Son, my Son. Is there any Creature our Heart centers intirely in? it is much then if God does not take away the Desire of our Eyes from us with a Stroke. How often hath it been found, that those Streams of Comforts, which we expected would continue long to run in a comfortable Channel, all on a sudden have been converted and changed into the bitter Waters of *Mara*, and have run with nothing so much as Blood and the Blackness of Tribulation?

Thirdly, The Lord affects us with Evil personally. Thus the weeping Prophet *Jeremiab* speaks, *Lam. iii. 1. I am the Man that bath seen Affliction by the Rod of his Wrath. He was unto me as a Bear lying in wait, and as a Lion in secret Places. Behold, and see if any Sorrow be like unto my Sorrow.* Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Thus is he personally affected, it is very home and close; so speaks the Psalmist, *I was a Wonder to many.* Thus when a Person looks upon himself, he is a Wonder to himself; he is a strange and sad Sight to himself, as *Jeremiab* was when in the Dungeon; as *Job* was, when he took a Potsherd, and scraped himself. Sometimes God changes a Man's Name from *Pasbur* to *Magor-Missabib*, *Jer. xx. 4. For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will make thee a Terror to thyself, &c.* When the Arrows of the Almighty are within a Man, and the Poison thereof drinking up his Spirits, the Terrors of God making him afraid on every Side; then does he affect one with Evil in a personal Way: As when he sent *Nathan* with this Message unto King *David*,

vid. 2 Sam. xii. 7. *And Nathan said unto David, Thou art the Man.* When God singles out a Man, perhaps among a Million, among vast Multitudes, in a City, Town or Country, very populous, and as it were points with the Finger to that Man, saying, Mark him; others then in Drovers pass by, and are preserved; but when the Person pointed out among many approaches, then Heaven lays hold on him personally, *Thou art the Man.*

Fourthly, Heaven affects us with Evil, not only in a *personal*, but in a *relative* Way, in the very nearest and dearest Relations we have in Life. We may lock and bolt the Doors of our Houses, in order to render us secure from Man; but though we shut them with the greatest Safety, yet God will be in our Families, in an Hour that we are not aware of: He leaves a dead Corpse almost in every Dwelling of the *Egyptians*, that Night wherein *Israel* marched from their Territories. *Exod.* xi. 5. *And all the First-born in the Land of Egypt shall die, from the First-born of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his Throne, even unto the First-born of the Maid-Servant that is behind the Mill; and all the First-born of Beasts.* They might apprehend no Danger threatening either their Flocks or Families, when they repaired to Rest that Night; but behold the Carnage before next Morning, in almost every Family there is a Funeral. Thus Heaven oftentimes affects us with Evil in our Families: *Ephraim* found the Smart of this Affliction in his Family, 1 *Chron.* vii. 23. *And he called his Name Beriab, because it went Evil with his House.*
David,

David, when he was lying upon his Death-Bed, was heavily afflicted with an Evil of this Kind; *Although my House be not so ordered with God, &c.* There was great Disorder in his Family; there was Murder and Adultery, Incest and Rebellion; and withal, this bloody Motto was written over the Door of his Mansion-House, *The Sword shall never depart from thy House.* Amnon, one of his Sons, ravishes his Daughter Tamar; Absalom slays Amnon, his Brother, slyly at a Feast when drunk, 2 Sam. xiii. 28. Absalom rises up in an unnatural Rebellion against his Father, and this terminates in Absalom's Death; which, though a most profane Son, yet nevertheless David had near died with Grief upon that Occasion. How often was the good Patriarch Jacob affected with Evil in his relative Capacity? Gen. xlii. 36, 38. *And Jacob their Father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of my Children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: All these Things are against me. My Son shall not go down with you; for his Brother is dead, and he is left alone: If Mischief befall him by the Way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray Hairs with Sorrow to the Grave.* If we look into Aaron's House, we may see how this Saint of God is affected; his two Sons, Nadab and Abihu, struck dead with a Flash of Lightning; *before the Sanctuary there went out Fire from the Lord, and devoured them:* Shocking Sight to a Father's Eyes especially! If we go to Eli's House, we shall find an affecting Scene there; his two Sons, Hophni and Phinebas, slain; the Father,

ther, tumbling from his Seat, and breaking his Neck; his Daughter-in-Law, upon hearing of these Calamities befalling their Family, falls into Labour, dies in Childbed, and gives the innocent Babe a Name with her expiring Breath, which would have been a living Memorial of these mournful Miseries inflicted upon *Eli's* Family: *And she named the Child Icbabod, saying, The Glory is departed from Israel.* But shall we cast our Eyes forwards to the Families in *Bethlehem*, and the Coasts thereof, where we find almost every House in that City, and the adjacent Villages around, affected with Evil; where one or more massacred Children were there: We may see mourning Mothers. For, *in Rama was there a Voice heard, Lamentation, and Weeping, and great Mourning; Rachel weeping for her Children, and would not be comforted, because they were not.* She had them no more, those dear Delights, they were not; no natural Enjoyment could atone for them, she could not be comforted, because they were not. The Mothers in *Rama* could not be comforted, the affecting Loss could not be compensated; hence they weep over them, while they wash the bloody Wounds of their murdered Babes, and kiss their mangled Corpse with briny Tears. O! thus Heaven sometimes affects and afflicts us with Evil in a relative Way.

Fifthly, As Heaven affects and afflicts us with Evil in a relative, so also in a *righteous* Way. *Psalms lxxv. 5. By terrible Things in Righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God of our Salvation, &c.*
 God

God may rebuke us in Wrath, but he cannot rebuke us in Unrighteousness; though his Providence in various Points may be perplexing unto us, we know not wherefore he contends, what is the particular Cause of his Controversy, or what will be the Effect of such a Providence. These, and such like Points in Providence, may be very obscure; God may hide these Things from a Person, and yet nevertheless all is in Righteousness. *Psalms xcvi. 2. Clouds and Darknes are round about him: Righteousness and Judgment are the Habitation of his Throne.* Though Darknes may attend the Dispensations of Heaven, yet they have their Rise from, and are regulated by divine Righteousness and Judgment. There is more of divine Majesty, Glory, and Righteousness in God's Dispensations, than at first we discern. Some talk of such a thing as the second Sight, what it may be, I say not; but sure it is, before we can have a just Idea of the Works of Heaven, there is something requisite, like a second Sort of a Sight, in order to understand their Rectitude. The Lord's Dispensations are deeply laid; there is a divine Policy that appears in them, which is not visible to every ordinary Spectator; the Reasons of State are not at first taken up by the most sagacious: A General does not discover at first what is his Design in marching and countermarching an Army; neither does Heaven at first demonstrate what are the Reasons why he does this or that; yet it is a sterling Truth, that *the Judge of all the Earth does Right in all he doeth.*

Sixthly,

Sixthly, Heaven affects us with Evil *wisely*, as well as righteously. God's Works and Ways are manifold; but in every Duplicate and Folding thereof is the highest Wisdom wrapped up, *Psal. civ. 24. O Lord, how manifold are thy Works! in Wisdom hast thou made them all.* It is said, *Natura nihil facit frustra*; "Nature does nothing in vain." So neither does Providence; for all the Productions thereof are the Result of God's most mature and wise Counsel; even the minutest Circumstance in a Providence, is exactly coincident with his eternal and profound Purpose: His Acts are not sudden and rash, but Acts of Counsel; not taken up upon the present Posture of Things, but the Resolves of Eternity, says Mr Charnocke *upon Providence.* As he is the highest Wisdom; so all his Acts relish of it, and he guides his Will by his Counsel, *Eph. i. 11. Who worketh all Things after the Counsel of his own Will.* The Wisdom of God is as much seen in the making an Insect, full of Life and Spirit in all the Parts of it, to perform all the Actions suitable to its Life and Nature, as in making Creatures of a greater Magnitude: Does not his Wisdom direct them to the End he intended them for in their Creation, as little as they seem to be? We short-sighted Mortals see but little of the Wisdom of God in his Works, and particularly into the Infliction of Evil; they are Foolishness unto us, even as the Preaching of the Cross, Christ crucified, is Foolishness unto them that perish: That God, by a stupendous Act of his Wisdom and

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Sovereignty, should transfer the Evil of the Guilty upon the Innocent, upon his own dear Son, Christ Jesus ; this is a Piece of Wisdom which the natural Man, neither before nor since Christ's Day, can receive : This is *the Wisdom of God in a Mystery* ; yea, what is called *the manifold Wisdom of God*. Thus we see that Heaven affects and afflicts us with Evil, after a most wise Manner, tho' we do not immediately perceive the Wisdom thereof : *What I do, thou knowest not now ; but thou shalt know hereafter*, John xiii. 7.

Seventhly, Heaven affecteth us with Evil sometimes in a *very sudden and surprising* Way. As God is pleased to affect us in a sudden Manner with Good ; for so he filled his Servants with the good Spirit in the Day of Pentecost ; *And suddenly there came a Sound from Heaven*, &c. Acts ii. 2. thus also he suddenly affects us with Evil. He spoke suddenly to *Moses*, and *Aaron*, and *Miriam*, Numb. xii. 4. It is no small Alleviation to those affected with Evil, that this Evil attacked them in a slow, leisurely Manner ; hence they are prepared to meet it, as they saw it a long Time approaching them : But when Heaven in a Moment, without any Premonition, affects us with Evil, when we had no manner of Apprehension of such an Evil, how does it affect every Power of our Soul, and every Organ of our Bodies, when sudden Evil surprises, as it did *Belsazzar* ? *In the same Hour came forth Fingers of a Man's Hand. Then the King's Countenance was changed, and his Thoughts troubled him, so that the Joints of his Loins were loosed,*

loos'd, and his Knees smote one against another. Thus, in an Hour that we think not, does the Son of Man come. Heaven does not always bring Evil full before our Faces, when he fetches a mortal Blow by it, but secretly, behind our Backs, and stabs us to the Heart in a Moment, before the Man can so much as say, *Lord, have Mercy upon me!* or, Have I found thee, O my Enemy? *Eutychus* fell down suddenly, *Acts* xx. 9. Evil suddenly arrested *David's* Sons, and *Job's* Sons: It sometimes seizes when eating, and drinking, and sleeping, *Job* i. 15, 18. Hence, if we would remark the Manner of Evil making its Attack, from sacred and human History, we shall find that Evil surprises some, as it did *Abel* in the Fields; *Eglon* in his Summer-Parlour: And Evil will surprise some, as it did *Saul* and *Jonatban* in their Flight from the Battle. *Augustus* died in a Compliment; *Galba* with a Sentence; *Vespasian* with a Jest; *Xerxes* laughing; *Sophocles* was choked with a Stone in a Grape; *Diodorus* died for Shame; *Johannes Megius*, preaching upon the Raising of the Woman of *Nain's* Son from the Dead, died three Hours after himself. It is reported of *Charles IV.* King of *France*, that being one Time affected with a Sense of his many and great Sins, he fetched a deep Sigh, and said to his Wife, By the Help of God, I will now so carry myself all my Life long, that I will never offend him more; which Words he had no sooner uttered, but he fell down and died. I have somewhere read of a Crowned Head, who died the very Moment he was putting his royal

royal Robe upon him. So suddenly does Evil affect us.

Eighthly, Heaven affects us with Evil, not only suddenly, but for *a long Season*. The Stroke may be sudden, but not so suddenly salved over, and healed; we may meet with that in a Day or an Hour, which may make us go mourning all the Days of our Lives afterwards. As *David* had a daily Evil in his House ever after that Affair in the Case of *Uriah*; the Sword never afterwards departed from his House to his dying Day; he closed his Eyes in the midst of the confused Noise of War. *Heman*, from his Youth up, was afflicted, and ready to die, *Psalms* lxxxviii. 15. There are Christians, who for a whole Life-time are affected with Evil, *Heb. ii. 15. And deliver them, who, through Fear of Death, were all their Life-time subject to Bondage*. Sometimes the Evil is longer lived than the Persons upon whom it was first inflicted; for Heaven visiteth the Iniquities of the Fathers upon the Children unto the third and fourth Generations; when the Fathers are dead, the Evil may live with the Children. The great *Charnock*, that penetrating Divine, I am persuaded when he expresses himself thus, does it to the Purpose: Says he, “ We see the present Dispensations, but are we able to understand the internal Motives? *May there not be some Sins of righteous Mens Parents, that he will visit upon their Children?* some Virtues of their Ancestors, that he will reward, even in their wicked Posterity?”—Well, Christians, God may affect us with Evil for a long Time: Threescore Years and ten,

ten are a Life-time; and so long did God afflict his People and Jerusalem, Zech. i. 12. *How long wilt thou not have Mercy on Jerusalem, and on the Cities of Judah, against which thou hast had Indignation these threescore and ten Years?* David, in Psalm xiii. hath no less than four *How long's*, his Sorrow seemed so long: But alas! the Evil where-with God afflicts some, is co-eval with their Days and Life itself. *What shall I say? He hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done it: I shall go softly all my Years in the Bitterness of my Soul,* Isa. xxxviii. 15.

The IVth Head was to shew why the Lord affects us with Evil. We apprehend God hath a threefold View in this: It is usual for him to do it either with a *probative*, a *purgative*, or a *punitive* Purpose; he proposes either to *prove*, to *purge*, or to *punish* us.

First, Heaven has a *probative* View; he does it with a Purpose to prove and try us, 1 Pet. i. 6, 7. *If need be, ye are in Heaviness through manifold Temptations: That the Trial of your Faith being much more precious than of Gold that perisheth, tho' it be tried with Fire, might be found unto Praise, &c.* Pure, solid Gold, though tried and tortured in a Furnace, yet if fine Gold, it loses nothing of its intrinsic Value; it rather receives some additional Refinement by the fiery Element, than impairs it: Thus it is with the real, genuine Christian, and sound Believer, when God affects and tries them with Evil; instead of losing any thing of their
true

true Value by the Trial, they rather, as *Job* testifies of himself when he was tried, came forth as Gold, *Job* xxiii. 10. *But he knoweth the Way that I take; when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as Gold.*—Thus when Heaven affects us with Evil, he thereby tries and proves both the Truth and Strength of our Grace. Do we not see that it is customary among Men, in order to try Gold, they will throw it down upon a Stone, that they may by the Sound thereof judge whether it is genuine or counterfeit? So God sometimes throws his People down upon hard Stones, to prove the Metal of their Graces; he has a Touchstone, whereby he tries the Quality of their Grace. It is plain that the Evil wherewith the Lord affected *Job* was probative; for God had given him a very flaming Character, as *a perfect and an upright Man*: But Satan suggests, that he was nothing more than a selfish, mercenary Man; and so tells God, if he would touch him in all he had, it would then appear that he was the veriest Hypocrite in the World: Well, an Experiment is made, it is put to the Trial; and the Issue shews, that he was just such a Man as God had described, and not the Man Satan suggested. Indeed we have often Occasion to observe, that when God affects many with Evil, they are worse and worse therewith. O! what a World of Wickedness proceeds from some Men? what Wrath, what Clamour, what Bitterness, what Evil-speaking, what Murmuring, what Unbelief, and the like? Thus *an evil Man, out of the evil Treasure of his Heart, bringeth forth evil*

Fruit; but a good Man, out of the good Treasure of his Heart, bringeth forth good Fruit. Hence very strange and different Discoveries are made by God's affecting Persons with Evil, inasmuch as this is one grand Purpose therein, *Deut. viii. 2. The Lord thy God led thee these forty Years in the Wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee; to know what was in thine Heart, whether thou wouldest keep his Commandments, or no.* Afflictive Evil serves both to prove and improve our Grace: *Crux Coticula Fidei*; "the Cross is the Whetstone of Faith."

Secondly, Heaven affects us with Evil, with a purgative View, with a Design to purge us of Evil. *By this shall the Iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the Fruit to take away Sin, Isa. xxvii. 9.* High Winds and loud Thunder are frightful, but they are necessary to purge the Air: So however high the Evil may run towards us, yet it is necessary in order to cleanse from this corrupt Affection, and the other impure Passions. Gentle Medicines will not do to eradicate cronic Diseases, which have been of long standing; but such as are more surly in their Operation does medical Prudence administer: For Instance; has Love to the Creature and the World been of long standing, and taken deep Root? then, in order to wean from the Love of the World, God makes every thing in it to wear a worse and another Complexion; he transports them as it were from under the Torrid unto the Frigid Zone; hence they cry, *Who can stand before his Cold?* Psalm cxlvii. 17. He changes the Lee Shore into a swelling Sea, so that they turn Sea-sick,

sick, and are heartily weary of the World; it is imbittered unto them in every thing: As the Nurse puts some acid or bitter Thing upon her Breast, to take off the Child from the sweet Milk, and put its Mouth out of Relish; so doth God imbitter our Conditions in this World; that so all the Sweets which we have here, we may use them as if we did not, and possess them, and they not possess us and our Hearts. Thus Heaven affecteth us with Evil, in order to purge our Hearts from Evil.

Thirdly, God affecteth us with Evil in a punitive Way, in order to punish us for our Iniquities, as we see in the second Verse of this Chapter, *You only have I known of all the Families of the Earth; therefore I will punish you for all your Iniquities.* As much as to say, Iniquity and Impunity may live together in some Families, like Man and Wife; they may sin, and yet have little or no Sorrow for their Sin: But, says God, it shall not be so in my Family, where I keep House, and have my Children about me; *You only have I known of all the Families of the Earth, therefore I will punish you for all your Iniquities.* God will have a Stroke at all our Sins, and a Blow at all our Backslidings; such as our Carnality and Covetousness; earthly and fleshly Mindedness; Unthankfulness for Mercies; Unbelief; Lukewarmness in God's Work; Grieving of God's Spirit; by our Conversation and Conduct, while it has had so little Savour of Christ, and has been so little seasoned with Salt, but, on the contrary, has been insipid, and too much ac-

cording to the vitiated Taste of the Times, and by our not beholding more of the blessed Lamb of God; by Neglect of Prayer, or our overly and formal Manner of going about it, in the Church, in our Chambers, and in our Families; by our falling from our first Love; by our violating of religious Vows; by our sinning after signal Mercies and Afflictions; and by our backsliding, in Heart and Life, to the Abominations which God has so often reprov'd us for. — Well, God says, he will punish for all these Iniquities; but more particularly he will punish for the Dagon Sin, that so often and so easily besets us; for the Iniquity that God has particularly marked, as he did old *Eli's*, 1 Sam. iii. 13. *for the Iniquity which he knoweth: And, as the Prophet points it out, Isa. lvii. 17. for the Iniquity of his Covetousness was I wroth, and smote him. Thine own Wickedness shall correct thee, and thy Backslidings shall reprove thee: Know therefore and see, that it is an evil Thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, Jer. ii. 19.*

The Vth Head was to shew what kind of an Hand the Lord hath in that Evil wherewith he affects us. To this Point I would briefly speak, namely, in two Particulars; that he hath, first, a *decretive* Hand; and, secondly, an *effective* Hand.

First, The Lord hath a *decretive* Hand in the Evil which affects us. *Acts iv. 27, 28. For of a Truth against thy holy Child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles*

*Gentiles and the People of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy Hand and thy Counsel determined before to be done. So, in Acts ii. 23. Peter tells them who had been instrumental in killing of the Lord of Life, that he was delivered by the determinate Counsel and Foreknowledge of God, otherwise they had had no Power over him. It is good and necessary for Believers to be always fixed in the Faith of this, That nothing cometh to pass by Chance or Fortune, as we say ; but that all Events which fall out or come to pass are from Eternity, freely and unchangeably ordained and appointed by the unalterable Determination and Decree of the holy and wise Counsel of God ; for he worketh all Things after the Counsel of his own Will, Ephes. i. 11. There is an unalterable Decree passed in the grand Court of Parliament in Heaven, concerning all Events which fall out in the World ; even such as we would think to be most uncertain and contingent, as Events determined by Lot, Prov. xvi. 33. *The Lot is cast into the Lap ; but the whole Disposing thereof is of the Lord.* What more uncertain, than that the Soldiers should not handle Christ, after the same manner that they handled the other two who were crucified with him ? and yet they broke not his Bones, as they did the Bones of the rest ; and they pierced him, which they did not do to the rest, and that because it was determined by God, that not a Bone of Christ should be broken, and also that he should be pierced ; and that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, wherever Mention was made*

of these Determinations, as we see in the Evangelists, besides many other mere (to us) accidental Things that befel him. Whatever Evil befalls us, it is not to be looked on as an accidental, fortuitous Event or Chance, but as determined of the Lord; who hath in his sovereign Wisdom and Counsel thought fit to have it so, and ordered it that it should be so, that his People in all Ages should meet with Affliction. Thus the Substance of the Trial and Exercise is to be looked upon as ordained and determined of *Jehovah*: Such a Determination as this must be the Ground of that in *Acts* xiv. 22. *And that we must through much Tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God*; and of that which *Paul* saith, *Acts* xx. 23. though he knew not in particular what Evils should befall him at *Jerusalem*, whither he was now going; yet he knew that Bonds and Affliction did abide him; *Save, says he, that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every City, saying, that Bonds and Afflictions abide me.* It was determined then that these, as Pages of Honour, should attend him; and should wait for his Landing in every Place he came unto. How clearly did *Job*, under his Evils, perceive this? *For he performeth the Thing that is appointed for me; and many such Things are with him,* *Job* xxiii. 14.

Secondly, As the Lord hath a *decretive* Hand in the Evil which affects us, so he hath an *effective* Hand. *Exod.* iv. 11. *Who hath made Man's Mouth? or who maketh the Dumb, or Deaf, or the Seeing, or the Blind? Have not I the Lord?* Such Evils

Evils affecting any, are of God's doing in the most ample Sense, and in their full Comprehension; being the direct Effects of his Agency, as well as the Heavens and the Earth are. That God hath an holy, and high, overruling Hand, in and over the Afflictions and Crosses that his People meet with: This is past all Doubt and Dispute as to some of them; such as Poverty, through God's immediate Hand blasting Mens Labours and Endeavours, or taking away their Goods by Sea or by Fire, or destroying their Cattle by Death; and Sicknefs upon their Bodies, or Death of Friends and Relations, and the like. In such every one will-grant that God hath an Hand; and every wise Christian will look upon them, as the Centurion, that great Believer did, *Matt. viii. 8, 9.* as God's Servants and Soldiers, under his Command and Authority, to go and return, as he enjoineth them.

Now we have attempted to treat what was proposed from this Text and Doctrine, *viz.* we have proved that there is no Evil which affects us, but God has an Hand in it; we have specified some of those Evils wherewith the Lord afflicteth us; we have shewn how he affects us with Evil; why he does so; and what kind of an Hand the Lord has in the Infliction of Evil. We now come to

The VIth Head, *viz.* the Conclusion of the Whole, in a few Uses of Application.

USE I. Is it so, as this Text and Doctrine declares? Hence learn, what a great God we have to do with. *Be still, and know that I am God.* Such a God is he, who can flat our Conditions with all Miseries in a Moment: As the Sea sometimes makes Breaches upon the Land, and swallows up Towns and Cities, no more to be recovered. *I will have Mercy upon the House of Judah, and save them by the Lord their God; and will not save them by Bow, nor by Sword, nor by Battle, by Horse, nor by Horsemen,* Hosea v. 7. As God saves without Bow or Sword, so he can destroy without Bow or Sword, even with his own Hand from Heaven many Ways: Of which I will say, as one doth of *Mary's* being with Child by the Holy Ghost, *Mirari licet, rimari non licet*; "such Dealings of God may be wondered at, but curiously searched into they may not." It may be said of God, and the Engine he useth against Men, as *Hushai* saith of *David* and his Followers: *Thou knowest that thy Father and his Men be mighty Men; and they be chafed in their Minds, as a Bear robbed of her Whelps in the Field,* 2 Sam. xvii. 8. God sometimes, when he sets upon the Sons of Men, is as fierce Creatures chafed, and chaced, and robbed of their Young, very fierce; and so are all the Engines which he useth. How fierce was *Simei* against *David*? and threw Stones, and cursed him: *God hath set him on,* saith *David*: *We are made a Spectacle or Theatre,* saith the Margin, *to Angels and to Men.* And I think God hath sent us forth last for this sad Service, as appointed

ed to Death and Slaughter in all that is dear,
1 Cor. iv. 9.

USE II. We may hereby learn that there is no Evil, though never so shocking, that affects us precariously, in a vague, uncertain Manner, as if it might or might not be : No, my Friends, Christ must needs go through *Samaria* ; there is a divine *Need be* in the Dispensation of Providence : Casualties fly not at random, but are the Result of Counsel, and the Work of Power and Wisdom. This, my Friends, God let me clearly see, in the present Providence, as to the Day, the Time, the Manner, and all the Circumstances of my dear Child's Death. The Stone of itself pierced not into *Goliath's* Head, and killed him, but as, with the Wisdom and Power of God, it was slung by *David*. *Sisera* might have passed the Doors of different Houses, before he slipped into *Jael's*, there to meet with the Instrument of his Death.

USE III. This Text, Doctrine, and Providence, we would now improve for the Use of this Church in particular. It is true, it is a strange and sad Stroke upon me ; God hath been whipping of me with a Rod, so sharp that it doth not slightly break the Skin, and make me bleed ; but it goes into my Flesh, yea farther it goes, through the Bones into the very Marrow. — Well, my dear Brethren, shall I tell you it is for your Sakes that I am thus dealt with this Day ; that I am cast down, but not destroyed ? It is for the Furtherance of your Salvation and Edification, and for the Salvation of yours, that I am thus chastised,

tised, 2 Cor. i. 6. *Whether we be afflicted, it is for your Consolation and Salvation; and whether we be comforted, it is for your Consolation and Salvation.*

— You know, my Friends, God sent me among you, with a very clear Call from Himself, as I have shewn elsewhere; and I have never, to this Moment, repented it; but still continue to rejoice that ever I came among you, while I have seen so much of the Travail of Christ's Soul in this Place. And this Day, by the Dispensation of it, he is further furnishing of me for greater Usefulness to you, as well as others. Yea, though he hath taken my Son away from me in this awful Manner, I resign him for your Sakes: Yea, though God should return me him from the Dead, and then call me, as he did *Abraham*, to offer him up again, I could now, at the Command of God, go and take him by the Hand, and lead him, Step by Step, to the Place of Destruction, if it was for God's Glory, and the Good of one or two Souls.

USE IV. In an Use to this Congregation and Auditory: Are there any of you here, though you are not childless, yet, alas! you are Christless? You seem to bewail my Loss of a dead Child: Your Condolance I cannot but accept as a feeling Token of your Affection for, and Sympathy with me, as a Parent, a Man, and a Minister; and, in Return for these Tears you are bathed in upon this sad Occasion, suffer me, in the Bowels of Christ, and with the earning Bowels of a Man, you now behold, as you may never see another
standing

standing and speaking to you in my Circumstances; I pray, permit me then to express my Concern for you: I am afraid there are some mourning more over the Loss of dead Friends, Children and Relatives, than they lament over their dead Hearts. Shall we bewail the Loss of a Child, more than the Loss of the Light of God's Face? I weep not this Day so much for him, as for you and my own Sin. — My dear Friends, *I am jealous over you with a godly Jealousy, lest, &c.* I dare not heal the Hurt of the Daughter of my People slightly, nor daub with untempered Mortar. The Hand of God is now over me, heaving his Rod; and he is now saying unto me, *I have not yet done with thee, Son of Man; if thou keepest back any of my Counsel, I will yet bring seven times more heavy Plagues upon thee than these*: And therefore, my dear Friends, let me ask you, or rather let God ask you by me, How is it with you? is it well with you and yours? Is it well with thee, is it well with thy Husband, is it well with the Child? After you have answered me, *all is well*, as the Old-Testament Believer did; I would ask, is it well with your own Souls? How stands Accounts between God and you? Where did God and you reckon last, and settle Accounts? Do you, if I may so speak, keep short Reckonings with God, or have you run a long Score in Debt between him, you, and your Families? Well then, I am sent this Day from God unto you, as the Prophet was to *Hezekiah*, with this Message unto every one of you that now hear

hear me, *Thus saith the Lord, set thy House in Order, for thou shalt die, and not live.* My Friends, is the Morning and Evening Oblation and Sacrifice of Prayer and Praise offered up in your Families, or not? Is there Praying with them, and for them, or a Neglect of this Ordinance? hence expect if so, you and the Heathen will fare alike; for God will pour out his Fury upon the Heathen, and all the Families of the Earth, that call not upon his Name, *Jer. x. 25.* — I will tell you something, my dear Friends, for your Good; that though I had been upon my Knees in my Chamber, that Morning of the Day when God visited me; and likewise my dear Child, before he went out with me that Morning, went up Stairs to his Chamber, fell on his Knees, and prayed: But, to my Grief and my Wounding, I omitted the Worship of God in my Family, that Morning of the Day which had so mournful an Evening. I say this, my Friends, for the Good of your Souls, and the Souls of your Families; your Children, your Wives, your Relations, and your Servants. O! let God have sometimes Morning and Evening Prayer in your Families: Look at me, and take Admonition; if not, from this Day forth I must be a Witness against you, whoever you are, when Trouble from the Lord comes upon you and yours. O! let not one of us be Christians praying and praising only in the Church; but we beseech you, in the Bowels of Christ, in the Bowels of Compassion for your Children and Servants,
that

that you be Christians in your own Houses. O!
fit loose to the World, &c.

Fourthly, I am come to improve this Providence to young People: The Old, they must die; but it may be, you young Men, and young Women, you young Children, you may die before the Old, as mine hath done at the Age of eight Years only. Death was mostly his daily Talk, how he dreaded it. I shall never forget the Manner in which he told me one Night before his Death, when sitting upon my Knee; he looked up at me with Tears, and expressed himself thus, "O! Death will come! Death will come!" and yet but a few Days before his Death, he often told his Mother, that he wished to die, and go to Heaven, that he might sing the Songs thereof. He delighted much in reading the Bible, and some other religious Books; particularly one lately published, of *A Young Child's Practice*; of which he was wont to tell me, after he had been reading of it, "O! I like the Reading of this Book, or that Reading." His Mother and I could not help observing, with what uncommon Advantages he read the third Chapter of *Proverbs* that Morning, before he went out with me; and with what a particular Emphasis he uttered these Words, in the same Chapter, *Ver. 11, 12.* as if he had been preaching to his Parents, how they should carry themselves under the Calamity coming upon them, *My Son, despise not the Chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his Correction: For whom the Lord loveth, he correcteth;*

reſteth; even as a Father the Son, in whom he delighteth. For Years I believe you would have found it a hard Matter to make him go to Sleep, without firſt going to God by Prayer: To my Knowledge he never told a Lie, nor ſpoke a naughty Word. I hope he was an elect Veſſel.

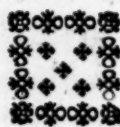
My young Friends and little Children, that are here, God is ſpeaking to you by this Sermon; and if you aſk what he is ſaying unto you, I anſwer, He is ſaying, *Remember thy Creator in the Days of thy Youth*: Remember he hath made you, that he keeps you every Day, provides for you; and there is none other that can ſave you from Hell, and bring you to Heaven, but he; your Parents may pray for you, and correct you; your Maſter may inſtruct you, but it is the great God that can only bleſs you: And therefore, *come, ye Children, hearken unto me, and I will teach you the Fear of the Lord: Keep thy Tongue from Evil, and thy Lips from ſpeaking Guile; depart from Evil, and do Good; ſeek Peace, and purſue it*, Pſalm xxiv. 11. I never remember indeed that ever the dear Deceas'd ſpoke any of thoſe bad Words, which I ſo often hear Children in the Streets mention; but that he would rather reprove them, and come and tell me, how ſuch and ſuch a Boy ſpoke ſuch and ſuch a bad Word, and that God Almighty did not love thoſe Children. O! ſeek betimes, my young Friends, that God may make you know his Son in the Morning of your Days.

But I ſhall juſt have done, after ſpeaking a Word upon this Occaſion to two or three young Gentlemen

men in this Place, who were his Favourites, the last Companions he was with before the fearful Catastrophe befel him. Why then, Young Men, God hath set up the Deceased for you to look at, that you may *set your Affections not upon Things below, but above*; to warn you to be likewise ready to set out, in the Morning of your Days, towards the Land of Rest, and your long Home. You will find that Time lost in the Morning of your Days, will render your Travelling more troublesome in the After-part of Life. You are just lanching forth into a World of general Wickedness: I shall be glad for your Sakes, if this Providence hath made you to see the Uncertainty and Vanity of all dying Enjoyments; and that it any way contribute to the bringing of you nearer to Christ in the Morning of your Life, which is the throng Time of Conversion, as some say, from fifteen to twenty five. Trees, if they bud not in the Spring, it is much if they bear any Fruit that Year.

But there is yet another Boy in this Place I would speak to, and I hope you will never forget what the Lord hath done: Reflect upon your forward Behaviour that Morning. Well, God hath spared you; you might have been in the Ruins with him, had not God prevented: You passed that horrid House, along with our two young Friends, and me, and my poor Child, a few Hours before the fatal Stroke was struck; but Heaven was pleased to single out this poor, little, bleating Lamb, in Infant Bloom, I believe, in great Mercy, because he saw him the fittest of the Five, to take
this

this sudden and unforeseen Flight from us, to Regions above the Skies. Now, my dear young Friends, as I and you have been the more remote and innocent Occasions of the Death of the dear Creature; O! Heaven forbid that he should appear against you and me at the Judgment-Bar, as a Witness at the last Day, testifying, that God smote him with surprising Death for our Sakes, that we might be also ready; and, lo! we have lost all the glorious Benefits with which this Providence was big; and, what is more mournful, we have lost our immortal Souls. But, O righteous Father, rather may this Death be the mournful Means, as the seeming Death of *Joseph* was, of preserving alive much Life, and saving the Souls of some! *Amen, So be it.*



P O S T S C R I P T.

AS the Writers of the following Letters, directed to me and Mrs *Potts*, upon the melancholy Occasion of the Death of an only Child, are *anonymous*; so I apprehend the Publication thereof cannot subject them to any personal Remarks. Hence I have presumed to publish them, which, I hope, the Goodness of my unknown Friends will pardon; for if I knew them, Duty and Gratitude must constrain me to beg their Licence for this. Who they are, and whether or not at this Distance of Time they may be numbered among the Dead, I know not: But if Friends possessed of such *tender Feelings*, as these Letters imparted to the Disconsolate, are yet living, and can approve of my having the Pleasure of their Acquaintance, I shall esteem it a Favour; if not, please to accept the grateful Acknowledgments of a childless Father and Mother, who wish you and yours their Blessing, and God's Blessing for ever.

REV. SIR,

London, June 28, 1760.

“ BEING deeply affected with your present Circumstances, and being sensible that the Christian under heavy Trials needs great Supports, tho’ the Scriptures are the only Source of solid Conso-

lation, as applied by the Spirit ; yet having found a Sentence dropped from a Christian Friend, often a great Relief to the Mind under afflictive Dispensations of Providence : If therefore the Perusal of the following Lines may contribute to your Consolation, the Design, Sir, is answered of

Your unknown Friend.

Fair Flower, cropt by Death's remorseless Hand,
How art thou fall'n ! sunk cold and dark beneath
Thy Bed of Earth, to rise no more to Light,
To Life and Joy. Thus Nature's Voice is heard,
Plaintive and foolish : For 'twas Heaven's Care
That gather'd thee, to Realms of purer Light
To fall no more ; to feel no Winter's Tooth,
No scorching Sun to strike thy tender Root,
Or Foliage blast : To higher Life thou'rt born,
Of Heav'n's great Family one, where Myriads burn
In rapt'rous Bliss. Thee not the Grave confines,
But takes the mortal Part, the Fruit of Sin,
Where Death is bounded, where his Triumph ends.
Beneath the Wings of Jesus thou art plac'd,
Cloath'd with his Light ; while, from his burning
Throne,

New Visions open, and this Life's forgot.
A Dream, a Shadow, from all Thought expung'd,
Scarce hadst thou tasted of the bitter Draught,
Which Flesh inherits in this chequer'd Scene,
Life's Hemisphere below, half light, half dark ;
Scarce hadst thou enter'd on the thorny Path,
Which Sin first brought, ere God's paternal Love

To

To his rich Bosom took thy infant Soul,
And planted thee in Bliss.

Whence grows the triple Cord
That binds parental Hearts from thee, O God?
Father and Love thy Name: Can Mothers dash
Their young, their sucking Children, from their
Breasts?

Forget, forsake them, in their Wants and Cries?
Can Love, which strikes its Fibres deep and strong,
Be rooted up? It may; yet canst not Thou,
Father Supreme, thy holy Name forget,
When dying Infants roll their Eyes to thee,
By heav'nly Instinct taught to look for Help?
For Life and Vision, Joys, and Rest above,
Which Multitudes enjoy? Shall I then call
Thy Image back on Earth? or wish thee here,
'Midst Pride and Envy, Wrath, and viler Names,
Of Sin's prolific Womb; which walk around,
Cursing and curs'd thro' ev'ry Stage of Life?
Ah! still I view thee, still thy Form grows out
From Memory's inward Eye, retentive most
Of what it lov'd. Thy little Voice is heard,
By Fancy's wakeful Ear, in ev'ry Place;
Thou liv'st again, and play'st before mine Eyes.
Yet wast thou here, my Heart would cast its View
Thro' Time's dark Vale, and fear a thousand Ills
Rip'ning for thee. So self-tormenting Love
Forms its own Rod; while Heav'n pitying, sees
The fair Infirmary so near to Truth:
For he that loves, will by his Side perceive
The Thorn of Fear; and Fear has many Eyes,
Jealous, where Love is strong, of ev'ry Ill

That can spring up to Man. But Heav'n has cut
 This Cord in twain : Let Fear be hush'd to Sleep ;
 Let Love still burn. Quicken my Soul within,
 Thou Lamb of God, and cleanse my Sins away ;
 Those Thorns and Clouds, those Storms and Stings
 of Hell,

That rage within : Then, like a Child, I'll meet
 Death's sternest Frown ; then mount on Wings of
 Fire,
 To join *Yehovah's* universal House."

M A D A M,

" THAT moving and pathetic Discourse,
 made by a tender Father on the Loss of an only,
 and so promising a Son, thrills through all the se-
 cret Avenues of my Heart, and warms yet the in-
 most Recesses of my Soul. Though I am a Stran-
 ger to you, I am none to what you feel ; but sin-
 cerely participate in your Sorrow and Affliction.
 What human Heart can remain undissolved ? and
 what Eyes forbear to shed Tears on such a striking
 Occasion ? So dear and blooming a Prospect,
 snatched from all your Hopes ; torn from a Fa-
 ther's Bosom, and rent from a Mother's yearning
 Heart !— But is *there Evil in a City, and the Lord*
hath not done it ? Is not He the sole Disposer and
 Manager of all Things below ? and *who dare say,*
What doest thou ? He hath taken from thee, with
 a Stroke, the Delight of thine Eyes ; and how
 many such Warnings have we every Day around
 us ? how many Calls from the Dead in Body, to
 the

the Dead in Sin? *The Man of Wisdom shall bear, and return unto the Lord his God.* It is he that appoints the Rod; and, often unknown to us, converts it into a Blessing. Your Case is not singular; how many poor Parents have had their Children butchered before their Eyes? Remember the glorious Company of Martyrs; how have they despised what we call Life, embraced the Tortures, and sung their Redeemer's Praises in the midst of devouring Flames? Hast thou not heard the mournful Voice of *Rachel* at *Rama*? how many helpless Infants there perished, murdered in their Mothers Arms, to gratify the Passion of a bloody Monster.—Thy Loss is great, but greater is thy Son's Gain. Be not disconsolate, he is gone before to pave the Way, to embrace his Saviour in the Fulness of Joy. *It is the Lord's Doing, and wondrous in our Eyes*; let him do what he pleaseth. *He seeth not as Man seeth. Why should I mourn, saith David, now he is dead; I must go to him, but he never can return to me.*—Are we sorry that he has gained the blessed Mansion? do we envy his Happiness? no: Our only Grief is the Loss of his dear Company so soon. Alas! we are ignorant, and know nothing. What Joy in a Maze of Troubles! what Pleasure in a Circle of Sorrows! May not a Florist transplant where and how he pleaseth? Be comforted: The Lord hath found something good in him, and taken him before he was tainted with the Vices and Corruptions of a sinful World. May his all-supporting Grace strengthen and enable you to say, with the patient *Job*, *The Lord giveth,*

*giveth, and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the
Name of the Lord!*

I am, MADAM,

*Your sincere Well-wisher, Fellow-sufferer,
and Lover of the Gospel of Christ,*

Monday Morning.

W. A.

Snatch'd in his early Dawn, so young in Years,
Yet old in Sense, claims sympathetic Tears.
A Loss so great, beyond our weak Relief,
Demands the soft'ning Balm of Christian Grief:
Share it in Part we may, but who can know
A Father's Anguish, or a Mother's Wo?
In such a striking Trial, may He alone
Who lent him you, support and hear your Moan,
Your Loan return'd, contentedly proclaim;
God gives and takes, bless'd be his holy Name.
Before To-morrow's Dawn the Healthiest may,
Be in like hasty Manner call'd away;
At any Age or Time, of all Degrees
Our heav'nly Florist plucks what Flow'r he please.
Death waits on all, watch and prepare therefore,
And think you hear him knocking at your Door.
When to the Sire the bloody Coat was born,
My Son, he cry'd, by some wild Beast is torn;
Doubtless he's rent, my *Joseph* is no more,
My poor gray Hairs in Sorrow must deplore.
But, O! what Tongue can *Job's* great Patience tell,
When on his Sons the fatal Mansion fell?
Since 'tis God's Will, why should I grieve or mourn,
Naked I came, naked I shall return.

Thrice

Thrice happy they who leave this toilsom State,
 Unknown to Vice, and Hurricanes of Fate;
 For where's the Satisfaction here below?
 Can Pleasure dwell in Labyrinths of Wo?
 A Sin-involved World, contagious Mals,
 Death opes the Door thro' which the Faithful pass
 To endless Life, to Fields of heav'nly Love,
 There sing sweet Anthems 'mong the Saints above;
 Sweet *Hallelujahs* to th' Almighty King,
 And by Him be instructed how to sing.
 But, hark!— His Voice: *Mourn not, my Parents*
dear,

*I'm happy— why then shed the fruitless Tear?
 Clasp'd in my Saviour's Arms, I taste and see
 His boundless Love—Prepare to follow me,
 And reign in Bow'rs of Bliss to all Eternity!*

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P.S. **T**HOUGH few are able, I apprehend, even so much as to imagine what a Parent's Heart feels under such a severe Trial as I met with, when I had this only little bleating Lamb torn from my Bosom; who had been with Tears begging of me, a few Moments before the fatal Blow was given, that he might return to Mr *Freeman's*, which we had just come from, and not go further with me: I pressed him to proceed with inviting Promises; and, after walking a little further, we came to different Ways near that horrid House. I paused a while, and asked him which Way we should go: He looked to the Way different from that of his Destruction, gave me the last piercing and parting Look with Silence; as if he had said, "O! dear Papa, I see you are determined that I must go with you; I will go the Way you desire me." He did; and immediately the destructive Dome fell down, crushed and buried him in its Ruins! while I escaped, but can scarce say how, the same surprising Death. O! with what a *Dagger* in my Heart did I then return to my Friend's House, and to his dear Mother, to tell what Mischiefs had befallen me! — But though this was a deadly Dispensation to me, yet I desire to adore the Depth of divine Sovereignty, Wisdom and Mercy, that has made it work for so great Good to some, whereof I have had affecting Accounts; and, among others, the young Person who wrote me the following Letter is a living Instance, who has lately been

been received a Member of the Church to which I minister.

REV. SIR,

“ EXCUSE the Freedom I have taken in troubling you with these few Lines, it being the only Method I could take after so long Neglect. It is now three Years last *Midsummer* since I was, I trust, savingly converted and brought to Jesus, from a Sermon you then preached on these Words, *Shall there be Evil in a City, and the Lord hath not done it?* I was led to believe the awful Circumstance, which was the Reason of that Discourse, had only for a short Time struck a Terror into a young, gay, and ignorant Mind; and would, like other Troubles of a Day, shortly wear off: But, *blessed, and for ever blessed be the Lord, who in Judgment has remembered Mercy!* who has not suffered Satan, that Enemy of Souls, to steal away the Seed that his Spirit has sown! He that has plucked me, as a Brand from the Burning, has brought me thro’ many Trials and Temptations, from the World, the Flesh, and the Devil; and still continues so to do: *To Him be all the Glory.* I have had many Hours Uneasiness for my Ingratitude to you, in not letting you know the Happiness of my State since that Time; but I hope you will excuse the Omission, and what is amiss otherways. I am,

Reverend Sir,

Your Unknown Convert.”

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A
S E R M O N

PREACHED IN

CRISPIN-STREET, LONDON,

On the Occasion of the DEATH of

MRS SARAH FISHER;

Who departed this Life *November 25, 1764,*

In the Forty-seventh Year of her Age.

By JOHN POTTS, V.D.M.

*That through Death he might destroy him that had the Power
of Death; that is, the Devil: And deliver them who, thro'
Fear of Death, were all their Life-time subject to Bondage.*
HEB. ii. 14, 15.

TOGETHER WITH A

L E T T E R

From that Learned and Judicious DIVINE,

The Rev. Mr RALPH ERSKINE,

Written to Her, concerning some Cases of Conscience.

S. H. B. A. I. O. N.

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A
L E T T E R

From the Reverend

MR RALPH ERSKINE,

TO THE LATE

MRS SARAH FISHER.

M A D A M,

YOUR Line came to my Hand a considerable Time after the Date of it, and also at a Season when I was obliged to lay it aside unanswered; but lately having taken it again in my Hand, I thought it my Duty to gratify your Desire, by giving some Answer.

I am glad that the Lord hath made any poor Writings of mine refreshing to you: Mean time, I see by your Line you are under Fears, lest, notwithstanding the Advantages you have enjoyed, you have no more but a Head-Knowledge; and several other Grounds of Jealousy you express about yourself, wherein you desire I may deal plainly with you. Dear Madam, Though it is hard for me to write on this Head to one, that I know no more of than just what your Letter relates; yet there are some Things dropped in it, which, if they be told me from an upright, ingenuous Heart, may give some Handle to shew, that the Seed of Grace may really be sown, and that
the

the Lord is humbling you in order to heal you in due Time.

First, You complain that you want the sealing Testimonies of the Lord's Love, which you judge you would have if you belonged to him. As to this, it may be in Mercy the Lord is withholding the Seals of his Love, and the comfortable Feeling of it, until you be brought to find it in a more cleanly Way of believing his Love. It is said, in *Eph. i. 13. After ye believed, ye were sealed*: The only sure Ground of Faith is the Word of Grace and Truth there spoken of, and not our Feeling. The felt Sealing of the Spirit of Promise is not to be expected before our believing the Word of Promise: If we should have any thing like a Feeling of his Love, before our Believing of his Love, we would be ready to build our Faith upon transient Feelings, and Frames, and Influences, and not upon the sure Word of Promise. Though the revealing Work of the Spirit opening the Word, is prior to Faith; yet the sealing Work of the Spirit is posterior to it. Many are deluded that rest upon Feelings, and build their Faith of God's Love, not chiefly upon what God has said, but merely upon what they have felt; and as these Feelings are up and down, so is their Faith. It will therefore be your Mercy, if the Lord be withholding what you call the sealing Testimonies of his Love, till once you be made to give him the Glory of his Truth, by believing his Love revealed to you in his Word; and then may you expect the Comfort of it sealed to you in your Heart. The Woman,
with

with the bloody Issue, had no sensible Feeling of Virtue coming from Christ, till once she touched the Hem of his Garment by Faith, *Luke viii. 43—48*. If you expect and wait for Feelings to found your Faith, they are mercifully denied you, that you may build upon a surer Foundation; namely, Christ speaking in the Word for the Ground of your Faith, before you have any Feeling of him in your Heart for the Encouragement of Faith.

Secondly, You tell me, you can hear others talk of sweet Communion with the Lord, and of their longing to be dissolved and to be with Christ, while yet the Thoughts of Death are terrible to you; and at the same Time you complain of Deadness, Coldness, and Carnality, fearing you want Love to Christ; and that these Things are not the Spots of God's Children. Dear Madam, If you have got a View of the Plagues of your own Heart, and are indeed kept poor, and needy, and empty, and humbled, under a Sense of your Want of all Grace and Goodness in yourself, that Christ and his Fulness may be the more precious and acceptable to you: You have the Advantage of those who are enriched with greater Enjoyments and Attainments, if they be lifted up with them. For, *blessed are the Poor in Spirit; blessed are they that mourn; blessed are the Meek; blessed are they that hunger and thirst after Righteousness. To this Man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite Heart, and trembles at my Word. Matt.v. 3—6. Isa.lxvi. 2.* I hope this is the Case with you; and that because
of

of what also you afterward say in your Letter, That sometimes you can rejoice at the Doctrine of God's everlasting Love to his chosen Ones, though you cannot see your own Interest in it; and are sure, that if ever you be saved, the Crown must be upon the Head of Christ. This looks like the Language of one whom God is humbling in order to exalt, and emptying in order to fill in due time; see *Psalms* ix. 18. and x. 17. and cxiii. 5—7.

Thirdly, You speak of your having been under many Temptations; but that you do not remember any Promise to have come with Power for your Deliverance. Dear Friend, If Deliverance has come to you from Time to Time, according to the Promise, even powerful and merciful Deliverance, whether suddenly or gradually, though the Promise itself has not come to you with such Power, or in such a Manner as you think it has come to others, you should be thankful. The Lord's Way of bringing home the Promise to the Heart, is various towards some and others. However, I know little Odds between a Promise poured in sweetly upon the Heart, and a Heart poured out sweetly upon the Promise; the latter may be as sure and safe as the former. If the Promise has but in holy Providence come to your Mind, whether by Hearing, Reading or Musing, so as you have been helped to make it Matter of Prayer and Pleading before a Throne of Grace, be you content, Madam, and bless God for it. Many are ready to depend more upon the felt Power and sweet Influence, by which the Promise comes to them, than upon the Pro-

Promise itself: And hence, when that Power and Influence is withdrawn, their Faith is to seek; they cannot rest upon the bare Word of God, the Bread on which the Soul should live; unless, like little Children, they get the Butter and Honey of some sweet Influence spread upon it. This Disposition, in any godly Souls, is much owing to the sad Remains of a legal Temper, that makes them seek for a Ground of Faith and Hope, more in themselves, and in what is done by them, and wrought or felt in them, than they do by going out of themselves to what the Lord is in himself, and has wrought for them, and spoken to them. Faith is most strong when it can live on a bare Promise, without the Supports of Sense. Endeavour you, Madam, through Grace to rest upon a promising God, giving Credit to his Truth; and you shall find him, in his own Time, a performing God, giving Comfort to your Heart. Seek Rest, not in Streams of Blessings and Comforts only, that come from Him, and may take various Turns; but in Himself, the Fountain, who is still the same. But I fear I have insisted too much. If you want I should explain any thing here written further, you may let me know by another Line. I have not in the least studied to flatter you; I have no Temptation to do so, being quite ignorant of you, further than you have told me. If you please to let me know your outward Station or Situation, whether it be high or low, it will be agreeable to me. I shall wish I may be able to do Service to your Soul. And if what I have here

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written,

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written be any way useful to you, and suitable to the Case you wrote of to me, I will be glad you let me know you have received this Line. If it come in Time, to answer any Difficulty you may yet be under, you will the more readily pardon and excuse my having been so long o' coming with it. May the Lord bless all his own Means of Grace, and make your Soul prosper !

I am, MADAM,

Your very humble Servant in Christ,

Dunfermline,
Jan. 19, 1741-2.

RALPH ERSKINE.

S E R M O N X X .

MALACHI iii. II.

*And I will rebuke the Devourer for your Sakes,
and he shall not destroy the Fruits of your
Ground; neither shall your Vine cast her Fruit
before the Time in the Field, saith the Lord of
Hosts.*

IN the preceding Part of this Chapter, the Lord prefers a Bill against the Jews for the Sin of Omission, inasmuch as they were not punctual in paying the Dues towards the House of the Lord, as you may learn from the foregoing Verse, immediately preceding our Reading: Containing an Exhortation or a Call unto them to reform this Practice; with a Promise of the Lord's blessing of them with great Abundance, in the Course of the Reformation of their Conduct, *Ver. 10. Bring ye all the Tyibes into the Storehouse, that there may be Meat in mine House, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the*

Windows of Heaven, and pour you out a Blessing, that there shall not be Room enough to receive it.—

Hence the Words of our Text are a Part of that Promise, of exuberant, teeming Plenty, which should flow towards the Jews in the Course of their Obedience to his Will: *And I will rebuke the Devourer for your Sakes.* — We would just take Notice unto you, that these Words have, first, a literal Meaning; and, secondly, a spiritual Meaning. The more literal Meaning is obvious; that when God sent Rain and fruitful Seasons upon the Land of *Judea*, so that there was a Prospect of great Crops, he would then rebuke these rising Vermin, and particularly the Locust, which oftentimes devoured the Fruit of the Field, when near brought to Maturity: He would not suffer these Devourers, particularly the Locust, the Caterpillar, the Palmer-Worm, and the like, to do Hurt. But, secondly, the more spiritual Signification of these Words is this: That as there are Devourers of a spiritual Sort, who prey upon the Strength and Vitals, the Peace and Comfort of the Church and People of God; so there are special Seasons wherein God will not suffer, but rebuke every Devourer.

The Words then, you see, in general are a Promise, respecting God's proceeding towards the Devourer for the Sake of his People: Indeed they contain a Threatning to the Devourer, and a Promise to the Devoured; and then more particularly note, (1st) The Character that the Enemy of God's People hath given him, *the Devourer*. I own unto you, that it is a Name no where besides to be met with

with in the Scripture; it is but this mentioned. In a literal Sense, most of the Eastern Nations knew what was understood by the Name: And in the spiritual, the holy Nation know who and what is the Devourer; *There is one who goeth about continually like a roaring Lion, seeking whom he may devour.* The roaring Lion is a fierce, voracious Animal; the little Lamb is soon torn to Pieces, and devoured by it. Thus the Devil is the Devourer. It is said, while he was coming, the Devil threw him down, and tore him. Well then, you will see how God proposes to deal with this Devourer. (2dly) He rebukes him; *I will rebuke the Devourer.* This still gives us the spiritual Meaning of the Word in the Strength of it; and shews us the Propriety of the Interpretation, inasmuch as God is frequently said to rebuke this Enemy, *Zech. iii. 2. And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan, even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee: Is not this a Brand plucked out of the Fire?* and again, *Judg. ix. Yea, Michael the Arch-Angel, when contending with the Devil, he disputed about the Body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing Accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.* Thus, you see, this is common Stile to Satan. (3dly) Notice upon what Account or Consideration it is that he rebukes for your Sakes; it is from the Love and Regard, *the Value* that he hath for you. Hence it is said, *I will spare the City for their Sakes,* 1 Chron. xvi. 21. *Yea, He reproveth Kings for their Sakes,* Psalm cv. 14. *He suffered no Man*

to do them Harm. Hence, *Jobn xvii. 19. For their Sakes I sanctify myself*; that is, for their Salvation, for the Sake of that; though he was rich, yet for our Sakes he became poor. Thus you see the Force of the Word, *for your Sakes*; i. e. For the Love I bear you, for the Safety and Protection of you, for your Deliverance, yea, for your eternal Salvation, *I will rebuke the Devourer for your Sakes.* (4thly) You see the Security which God gives to his People for his making out this Promise, *I will.* God's *may-be's* are better than all the World's *will-be's*. What then must his *I-will's* be? Why, it leaves the Affair without all further Doubt, that it shall be as God hath said. God's *I-will* is the *Procataractic*, or first Cause of every Promise: Hence is it said, *I will put my Law in their Hearts; I will be their God, and they sha'l be my People: I will have Mercy on whom I will have Mercy: I will take away the Heart of Stone out of their Flesh, and give them Hearts of Flesh.* Thus you see the Security of the Promise, viz. That God would rebuke the Devil, and every Devourer of the Prosperity of his People, for the Affection that he bears to them.

Now we apprehend that this is nearest to the Sense which our dear deceased Friend had these Words given her, as we are informed, as some Ground of Comfort before her Decease. And they are most applicable to her Case, whose Life was almost one continued Scene of Exercise, through the Bufferings of the Enemy, being in Bondage all her Life-time through the Fear of Death. Now in treating

treating upon these Words, we shall attend unto the obvious Particulars in the Text.

I. Treat a little of the Character here mentioned, *the Devourer*.

II. Shew how God *rebukes* him.

III. Enlarge upon the Cause of it, *for your Sakes*.

IV. The Certainty of it, *I will do it*.

V. Improve the Whole.

I. Then as to the Devourer. I would observe unto you, that as the natural Devourer, spoken of in our Text, destroys the Fruits of the Ground, as the following Expression signifies, *and he shall not destroy the Fruits of the Ground*; so we remark, that the spiritual Devourer destroys or devours the Fruits of the Spirit: We have an Enumeration of these in *Gal. v.* The Devourer indeed cannot totally destroy them; but he hinders their profitable and fruitful Growth, such as the Fruit of Love; for though where this Fruit of the Spirit is, it can never die, yet it may be so blighted and blasted, as a Stalk or Ear of Corn, that there appears little Verdure or Greenness in it, tho' still there is Life in the Root. This, I apprehend, was very much the Case with the dear Deceased: There was the Root of all *the Fruits of the Spirit, such as Faith, Joy, Peace, Love*, and the like; but the Verdure, and the Strength of these spiritual Fruits, the Devourer had an evil Eye upon; *the Enemy was suffered to sow his Tares among God's Wheat*.

Secondly, There is the *Fruit of Joy* that he devours. The Locusts from the bottomless Pit were very pernicious to this Fruit, in the Experience of our dear Sister: They preyed upon it so, that hardly a Stalk of it was left standing; her often Infirmities of Body, the Fears of her Mind, together with the furious Temptations of the Devourer, left little of the fair Flower of Joy upon the Face of our deceased Friend. Though she preferred *Jerusalem* above her chief Joy; yet while she sat by the Streams of *Babel* she wept, when she remembered *Zion*; and said, *How shall I sing the Lord's Song in a strange Land?* "Can I, in my strange Case, and when the Lord seems to carry himself so strangely towards me, sing one of the Songs of *Zion*?" No. Thus the Fruit of Joy was blasted by the Devourer.

Thirdly, The *Fruit of Peace*. This is a Fruit of the Spirit which the Devourer tears; though God's People may have Peace in him, yet *in the World they shall have Tribulation*. The Children of God dwell near uneasy Neighbours, who are always at Daggers drawing with them; hence, like *David*, they often complain, *Wo is me, that I dwell in Meshech, and sojourn in the Tents of Kedar! I am for Peace, but they are keen for War.*—Then there are such devilish Suggestions of Satan, that it is hardly possible to be at Peace, no more than the besieged Town can be easy and at Rest, when Bombs and Fire-Balls are continually thrown into it by the Enemy. Thus, I apprehend, it was with the dear Deceased, the Devourer often devoured her Peace.

Fourthly, upon this Head, The Apprehensions of Danger are ready to disturb our Peace. A Man cannot go to Sleep easily, if he apprehends there are Thieves shut in the House, or that there is some Fire secretly burning within his Dwelling: So, my Friends, when the Children of God are under any Apprehension of Danger, as to the Work of God upon their Souls; where they dread a Delusion, their Peace is much devoured: The Comforts of the Christian are injured by the Devourer in these and the like Respects. Now we pass on; but that we may have a just Character of the Devourer, view him under these following Points.

(1.) That he was once an Angel of Light, and had his Habitation at first in Glory. The Apostle Jude insinuates this, when he tells us, *that they left their first Habitation*: He was one of the brightest Stars in the higher Orbs of Heaven; in *Isa. xiv. 12.* called *Lucifer, the Son of the Morning*.

(2.) Pride and Ambition was the Sin of the Devil: So much is hinted to us by the Apostle, *being lifted up with Pride, he fell into Condemnation*. He valued himself upon his own created Excellencies, and would needs vie it with God. He said in his Heart, *I will ascend into Heaven; I will exalt my Throne above the Stars of God: I will sit also upon the Mount of the Congregation, in the Sides of the North. I will ascend above the Heights of the Clouds; I will be like the most High, Isa. xiv. 13, 14.* Some think that the Thing which gave Occasion
unto

unto his Pride to vent itself, was the Intimation of God's Design of taking upon him a Nature inferior to that of the Angels, in the Person of his eternal Son; and the Order given, that all the Angels of God should worship him, even in that Nature, when he should bring his First-begotten into the World. He disdained to worship God in a Nature inferior to his own, for which he was tumbled from Heaven to Hell, with all the Angels that joined him in his Apostasy.

(3.) Being cast out of Heaven, he was filled with the Madness of Revenge and Enmity against God: And finding our first Parents in Paradise, crowned with the Glory and Dignity of the divine Image, he, through his Flatterings, draws them into a Confederacy with himself against God, by tempting them to eat of the forbidden Fruit; whereby they and their whole Posterity had perished for ever, with the Devils, under the Weight of the Wrath and Curse of God, unless the Son of God had interposed to destroy the Works of the Devil, and to set the Captives of the Mighty at Liberty.

(4.) By virtue of the Curse of the broken Law, the Devil comes to have a legal Title to, and Dominion over, every Son of *Adam* by Nature. The Hand-writing, which was issued out against us upon the Violation of the holy Law, gave the Devil a Power from God, in a way of righteous Judgment, to rule in and over every Man and Woman, springing of the first *Adam*; hence called *the God of this World*: So that, Sirs, till you are
 joined

joined to the Son of God, by Faith in him, you are just the Devil's Lacqueys, to serve him according to his Beck and Inclination, you do his Works.

(5.) The Enemy into whose Hands we are fallen, is of all others the most dangerous and terrible : And, that you may know your Danger while under his Power, and the Obligations we are under to the Son of God, who *came to destroy him*, I will tell you, in two or three Words, what sort of an Enemy he is. He is a very powerful Enemy ; for though he has lost his original Integrity, yet he has lost nothing of his natural Strength ; if he were not under the Check of the Power of God, he could in a very little Time devour all Mankind, and hurry them wholly to Hell. He is a subtil and cunning Enemy ; therefore *called a Serpent, which is the most subtil and cunning of all the Beasts of the Field*. He suits his Temptations unto every Man's Temper ; he knows well what Bait is most ready to catch the unwary Sinner. He is an experienced Enemy : He has long dealt in his Soul-ruining and murdering Trade ; he has now had about six thousand Years Experience in this Business. A most vigilant Enemy : He leaves no Stone unturned, he loses no Opportunity to carry on his hellish Designs against the Glory of God, and the Salvation of Souls. He is a most fierce and raging Enemy ; hence we are told, that he *is a roaring Lion*. He is a numerous Enemy : It is true, he is here spoken of in the singular Number, but his Name is *Legion* ; although there be
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but one *Beelzebub*, the Prince of Devils, yet he has a numerous Train under him continually, on the Plots of his Kingdom of Darkneſs. And, Sirs, I make no Doubt, if our Eyes were opened, we ſhould ſee Swarms of evil Spirits in this Company, and in this very Place, all at work, to divert the Minds of Men from giving Entertainment to the Goſpel-Revelation.

The IId Head was, to remark how the Lord rebukes the Devourer.

First, He does it in a Way of limiting and laying Reſtraints upon him, ſaying, *Huberto ſhalt thou come, and no further; and, Here will I ſtay thy proud Waves.* If the Devourer had full Scope given him, according to his Deſires, he would devour all around, there would be nothing but Deſtruction in the Saint's Caſe: And therefore Satan well knew that God had made an Hedge about *Job*, and his Houſe, and all that he had; he found that *Job* was immured within ſtronger Walls than thoſe of Braſs. Hence, you ſee, he wants a Commiſſion at large, to range at large: No, God will not allow of that neither; but circumscribes his Commiſſion, ſave himſelf, *Job* i. 12. *And the Lord ſaid unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy Power, only upon himſelf put not forth thine Hand. So Satan went forth from the Preſence of the Lord.* Well, here you ſee, the Devourer is rebuked; he goes the whole Length of his Rope, and when he comes to the laſt Link of the Chain, he is checked, he meets with a Rebuff, as we ſay. This
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is one of the Ways which God takes in rebuking the Devourer, by chaining of him down, and not allowing him to put forth all that Power and Strength which is in his Nature; for Pride and Power would lead him to put forth the last Effort against Christ's Lambs: But God rebukes him; he calls him off; he will not let him bite, though he may allow him to bark at his Sheep.

Secondly, Another Way that God rebukes the Devourer, is, by clothing the Christian with a Coat of Mail, as the Armour of God the Apostle speaks of, in *Eph. vi. 13. Wherefore take unto you the whole Armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil Day, and having done all, to stand.* The Devil hath learned so much of Nature, that he knows we have weak Sides; and he considers what Member and Part of the Christian is most easily hurt, whether he can sooner give a Blow at the Head or the Heart; for some Christians have loving Hearts, but not so much Light in their Heads; and therefore he has most Success in pointing his Weapons and Blows at their Heads. Well, what does the Apostle suggest in that Case, as a Preservative and Defence therefrom? he speaks of taking *the Helmet of Salvation*, an Helmet is that which is a Defence for the Head; and *the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.* — Well, in short, God gives the Christian some Word, some Promise, which hath a peculiar Sweetness, Strength, and Aptitude in it, to their present Case, and their present Comfort; some Helmet for their Head, and some
Word

Word for their Heart : Hence, when the Devourer comes, he finds the Person prepared, the Door is shut, he cannot do as he was wont; and thus the Lord rebukes the Devourer. Thus the dear Deceased had this Promise, some Time before her Diffolution, that God would rebuke the Devourer. And this brings me to,

Thirdly, Another Way wherein he rebukes him; and that is, by removing his People from the Place where the Devourer is, namely, this Earth : He takes them out of the Devourer's Way, out of his Reach, that he can no more touch them. God, when he sees that the Storm is coming, like the wise Husbandman, he houses his Corn, he takes it out of the Way of the Weather : So God's People, who have been like the Fruit of the Field, which hath stood many a Blast since the Seed of Grace was sown, since the Blade begun to spring, the Stalk and the Ear to grow; many a Wind, many a Worm, many wet Day and Night, has it been exposed to.—Well, there are no further Blasts, it is ripe, and therefore he will not expose it any longer to the Devourer, but he cuts it down, and gathers it in; so when the Devourer comes, there is nothing for him, the Nest is flown. Thus, I apprehend, it was the Case with the dear Deceased, since the Seed of Grace was sown; and may be, there were approaching Storms which she could not so well have stood, and therefore God rebuked the Devourer. How? By taking his dear Child out of the Way intirely, so that those Enemies she had seen To-day, she should see them again

again no more and for ever.— It is in Mercy that God takes away the Righteous from the Evil to come, *Isa. lvii. 1.* so dealt he with *Josiah*, *2 Kings xxii. 20.* *I will gather thee unto thy Fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy Grave in Peace, and thine Eyes shall not see all the Evil which I will bring upon this Place.* So it is observable, that *Metbuseiab* died the very Year before the Flood; *Augustine*, a little before the Sacking of *Hippo*; *Pareus*, just before the Taking of *Heidelberg*: *Luther* observes, that all the Apostles died before the Destruction of *Jerusalem*; and *Luther* himself died before the bloody Wars broke out in *Germany*. Thus God frequently hides his People from the Temptations and Troubles that are coming on the Earth. Why? He sees many of them not in Case to endure them; and therefore in Mercy he takes them away, from a tempting and sinning World, to a Land of Holiness and Rest. While we are here, we live in a World that lies in Wickedness; every Sense of the Body betrays the Soul into Sin: The poor Soul can scarce look out at the Eye, and not be infected; nor hear by the Ear, and not be distracted; nor smell at the Nostrils, and not be tainted; nor taste by the Tongue, and not be allured; nor touch by the Hand, and not be defiled. O Believer! what is this Life, that thou art fond of? it is but a living Death, or a dying Life: It is full of Grief for Things past, full of Labour for Things present, and full of Fears for Things future. The first Part of our Life is spent in Folly; the middle Part is overwhelmed with Cares;

Cares; and the latter Part of it is burdened with Infirmities and Age: And what gain we by the Prolonging of this Life? Nothing, but to do more Evil, see more Evil, and suffer more Evil; and, should a Christian be unwilling to be rid of these Grievances? The great *Boston*, now in Glory, in an Address to his Children, thus expresses himself: "The World hath all along been a Step Dame to me; and wheresoever I would have attempted to nestle in it, there was a Thorn of Uneasiness laid for me. Man is born crying, lives complaining, and dies disappointed from that Quarter. *All is Vanity and Vexation of Spirit. I have waited for thy Salvation, O Lord.*"

The III^d Head was, to speak a few Words as to the Cause of this; *for your Sakes.*

First, For the sake of your Preservation; *I will spare it for Tens Sakes.*

Secondly, For the sake of your Salvation; *for their Sakes I sanctify myself.*

Thirdly, For the sake of your Deliverance; *He reprov'd Kings for their Sakes.*

Fourthly, For the sake of that sincere and strong Love which he bears them; *though he was rich, yet for their Sakes he became poor, that they through his Poverty might be rich.*

The IVth Head was, to discourse a little concerning the Certainty of his rebuking the Devourer, or the Security given thereof; *I will rebuke the Devourer.* We conceive this *I will*, more generally con-

considered, the Import of this Promise bears these following Things.

First, *I will* imports, that the Source and Spring of all Grace flows from the Sovereign Fountain of *Jehovah's* eternal free Will and mere good Pleasure: No Cause, extrinsic of himself, can be assigned, why he ever made a Motion relating to the Emanation of Grace towards Mankind. To this Purpose speaks *Jeremiah*, Chap. xxxiii. 3. *The Lord hath appeared of old Time unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting Love, therefore with loving Kindness have I drawn thee.* To the same Purpose is it in *Deut.* vii. 8. *The Lord did not set his Love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in Number than any People, for you were the fewest of all People; but because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the Oath which he had sworn, &c.*

2. *I will*, imports the Irresistibility of *Jehovah's* efficacious Grace; *I will*, says he: And though Sinners may answer, *we will not have this Man to reign over us*; yet God will be true, and every Man a Liar. He will break through, and burn up together all the Briars and Thorns of the Sinner's Inventions, wherewith they would fence themselves from, and fortify themselves against omnipotent Power; so that though they were Sinners of *Manness's* or *Saul's* Size, yet shall they be caught among the Thorns, and find it hard to kick against the Pricks, when the happy Hour of the Performance of the Promise approacheth.

3. As it imports the powerful Irresistibility, in like manner this divine *I will* imports an overcoming Sweetness, so as there is not the least Violence offered to any of the natural Faculties of the Soul : For when the Spirit cometh with his saving Influences, he sweetly overcomes the Sinner's Obstinacy and Ignorance, so that he becomes a free Volunteer. Hence *Paul* cries out, at the same Instant of Time wherein he was arrested by *Jebo-vab's* Hand, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* Thus his People are *willing in the Day of his Power.*

4. The Lord's *I will* imports, that in the Dispensation of his Grace, he proceeds not upon the Consideration of Creature Merit : This and the other Measure of moral Seriousness is not the Rule and Measure of the Lord's Manifestations ; so that the Persons thus and thus mortified and meet, should be the alone and only Favourites of Heaven, upon whom the Favours alone must fall. Was this the Case, barren, backsliding *Israel*, who was so much drowned in deep Degeneracy, would have had small Share thereof ; to whom nevertheless, the Lord declares, that *He will be as the Dew to Israel.*

5. Though the Lord's *I will* imports, that he neither bestows his Grace upon a People for the sake of their good or bad Case ; yet it imports that he does it mostly in the Season of their sad Case : That it is so, Scripture-Testimony, and the concurring Suffrage of the greatest Saints, confirm in their Experience. *Psalms cxvi. 6. I was brought low, and he helped me. Ezek. xvi. 6, 8, 9. And*

when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own Blood, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy Blood, Live : Yea, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy Blood, Live. Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy Time was the Time of Love ; and I spread my Skirt over thee, and covered thy Nakedness : Yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a Covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine. Then washed I thee with Water ; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy Blood from thee, and I anointed thee with Oil.

6. God's *I will*, imports spiritual Impotency, and the utter Insufficiency of every Means for effecting their real Reformation, while Birth was not given to the Promise ; in vain were they hewed by the Prophets, and slain with Words, while the Spirit's gracious Influence was restrained. Thus it appears, how small Success *Jeremiah* and other Prophets had in preaching in their Day, *Jer.xxv.4. And the Lord hath sent unto you all his Servants the Prophets, rising early, and sending them ; but ye have not hearkened nor inclined your Ear to hear.* Well, when all created Means were of no Account, Heaven gives Power to its divine *I will ; I will work, and none shall let it.*

7. It imports, that Sinners are not only passive in their first Regeneration, but also that they are equally beholden to the Spirit's Operation in all the After-acts of their Sanctification : In their first Regeneration, their Agency is represented by the Spirit of God ; such as the *Ethiopian* would have in changing of his Skin, or the *Leopard* his Spots.

And as to every Act of Holiness, after the Infusion of the first Habits thereof, it is equally ascribed to the Spirit's Operation : Hence, says the great Apostle to the Gentiles, *2 Cor.iii.5. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves, but our Sufficiency is of God; for it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good Pleasure.*

8. God's *I will* imports, that he hath a most tender Care of and Concern for his Church, and that even while she wildly wanders from him; to this Purpose speaks he, *Cant. iv. 8.*

INFERENCE I. See one great Reason why Believers in general, and the Deceased in particular, breathed so much after Manifestations of the Lord : "O! that I knew where I might find him; O! to see thy Power and Glory, as I have seen thee in the Sanctuary; O! when wilt thou come unto me?" Why, here is one great Reason for it : Because, by the Manifestation of Christ, the Lord rebukes the Devourer; Sin, Ignorance, Unbelief, Pride, Enmity, and the other Parts of a Body of Sin, they get a Wound by Christ's appearing and manifesting himself : All these Locusts of Hell are either killed, or obliged, like wild Beasts, to creep into their Holes, and disappear, when the Sun of Righteousness begins to shine. And to this I may join another Inference, namely, it lets us see why Believers do weary so much in the Lord's Absence, and cry for his Presence : Why, while he is absent, the Enemy comes in like a Flood, the Works of the Devourer get up their Head; and this is the Burden of the poor Soul.

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INFERENCE II. Hence we may learn, that God is the Contrôler-General of every Creature. Ah! however desirous the Dogs of *Egypt* may be to bark and bite at God's *Israel*, yet God will not let one of them move a Tongue when he is about to deliver his People; He *will rebuke the Devourer for their Sakes.*

INFERENCE III. Learn hence to see the Reason and Cause of that Doctrine, concerning divine Providence, and the Dispensations of it; namely, that *One Hair of our Head cannot fall to the Ground without the Will of our heavenly Father*: Far less, my Friends, can we lose our dear Relatives, whether it is in a more sudden and unforeseen Manner, or in a more slow and seen Manner, without his Presence and Hand therein. The Treasures of Hail and Snow are in his Hand; and the Armies of Heaven, of Earth and Hell, are at his Beck, with black Death; all are under him, and he acts as he pleases: *He does whatsoever he will in Heaven and Earth, &c.*

INFERENCE IV. God hath and will do much for the sake of his Saints, next to his own Glory. He hath done every thing for their Sakes: He hath made the World, and every thing in it, for their Sakes; all Things are yours: He hath saved the World for their Sakes; and the World stands to this Day for their Sakes. God, my Friends, hath an Eye to his own Glory in all that he doth; as the Father of a Family, though he may carry on a Correspondence with some different Part of the Globe, yet it is with a View to the Good of his Family:

Family : So it is for the sake of his People that God sends this and another Dispensation, yea, Death itself : For *all Things are yours, whether Life or Death.*

Finally, Hence God is a Friend in Life and in Death. Many will stand by one in a fair Day of Prosperity, but few in the Night of Adversity; Friends fall off like Leaves in Autumn : But our God is *a Friend that loveth at all Times*; yea, he shews his Friendship in Death. Our best Friends about us, when dying, can do little, though never so willing to relieve; they cannot, as God, say, *I will rebuke the Devourer; My Counsel shall stand; I will do all my Pleasure, I will, and who shall binder?*

But, in brief, I conclude, with a few Words unto the surviving Relative of the Deceased. Dear Sir, I sincerely condole with you under this Dispensation you are now exercised with; you have sustained a Loss in the Death of your dear Consort, who was truly a loving, faithful, and an obedient Wife, as well as a tender Christian : But suffer me to say, (what I apprehend) that you will soon be restored to each other; for if the Separation that is now made were to have been long, there probably would have been much more ado at Parting, it would not have been with so little Ceremony; for she seems only to have stepped aside, or gone out for a little *. Take it as a Sign that you will soon

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see

* The Deceased died while her Husband and Family were asleep; it would seem in her first Sleep.

see each other again, you shall go to her; and, for the present, I am persuaded you know that a Covenant-God is better to you than all Friends in the World; God can soon make up this Loss to you. What are the World's Comforts to God's Comforts? a Smile of God's Face in Prayer, can soon sweeten your bitter Cup, and make you forget all your Sorrows. *Psalm xciv. 19. In the Multitude of my Thoughts within me, thy Comforts delight my Soul.*

The Author of *the Fulfilling of the Scriptures*, tells of an eminent Saint in the West of Scotland; who, having lost his dear and only Son, got to his Closet, and there poured out his Soul freely to the Lord: When he came out to his Friends at length, who were waiting to comfort him, and fearing how he would take, such a heavy Stroke, he returned from Prayer with a chearful Countenance, and told some of his Friends, who asked him the Reason of his Chearfulness, that "he had got that in his Retirement with the Lord, that, to have it afterwards renewed, he would be content to lose a Son every Day."

God has indeed taken away the Desire of your Eyes from you with a Stroke; but I believe the Design thereof is good and godlike, namely, to draw you after her to Heaven, where she is gone before you. As when a Shepherd taketh up in his Arms a Lamb of the Flock, the Ewe followeth him of her own accord, and will not leave him: So when the Great Shepherd of the Sheep taketh a Consort or Friend from you, it should cause you
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to follow after him, and desire to be with him.
Therefore may He who has rebuked the Devourer
for the sake of the dear Deceased, in his own Time
rebuke him for his Servant's sake. *Amen.*

F I N I S.



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